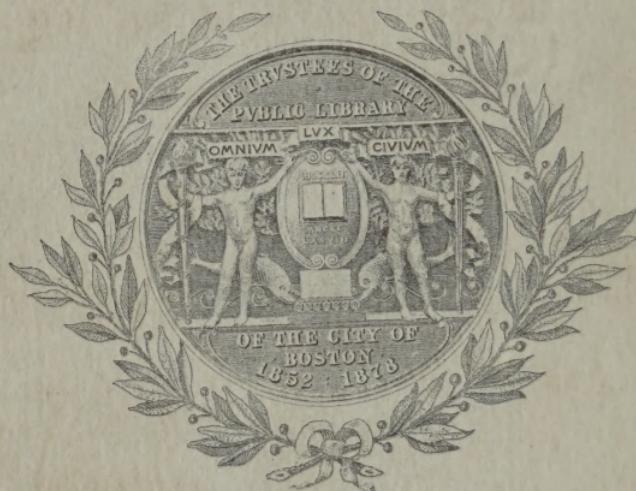


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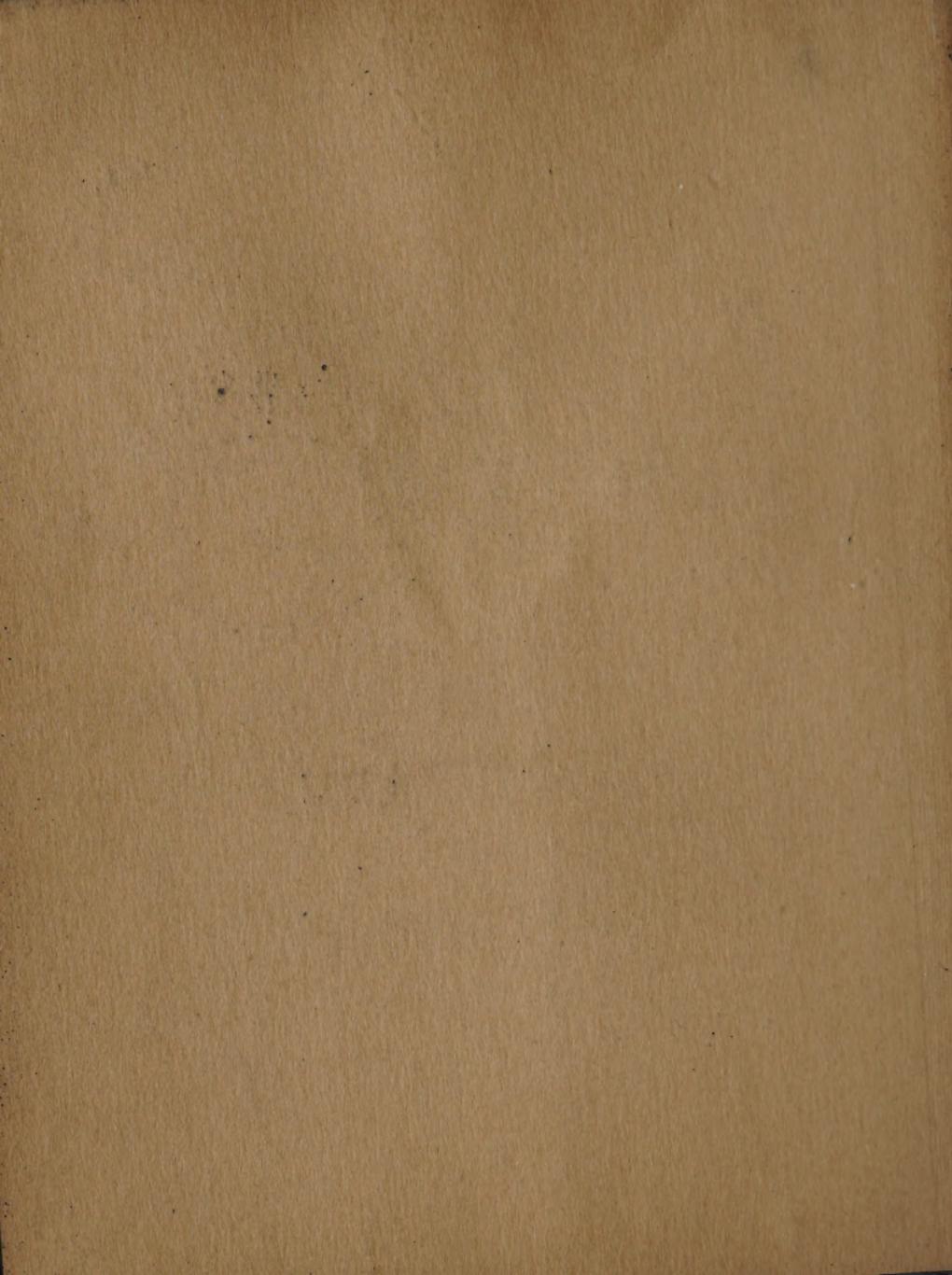
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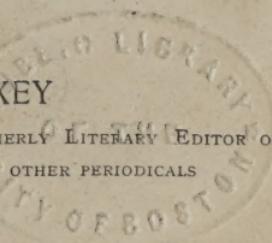
# THE TRADE OF AUTHORSHIP

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BY

# WOLSTAN DIXEY

EDITOR OF TREASURE-TROVE MAGAZINE, FORMERLY LITERARY EDITOR OF  
THE NEW YORK SCHOOL JOURNAL AND OTHER PERIODICALS



PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

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BROOKLYN, N. Y.

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## PREFACE.

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GENTLE reader, “a big book is a big evil:” I have tried to make this as small as possible. Credit me with doing my best to give you your money’s worth: I have credited you with a dollar. Remember we are comrades in arms, and ought to stand shoulder to shoulder. If I have said anything that seems a little sharp and unkind, it is not so intended.

“ Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil  
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,  
That I have shot my arrow o’er the house  
And hurt my brother.”

Ungentle critic and reviewer: I too have seen the wrong side of the carpet; I, like you, on occasion have looked into the big end of the telescope at my fellows, and I cannot honestly profess any deep affection for you unless you give my book a good notice. But if you can conscientiously speak well of the book in half a dozen lines, and send me a copy of your paper, you may then consider me kissing your hand with respect.

THE AUTHOR.

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*“I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done,  
than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching.”*

—SHAKSPEARE.

## I. THE AUTHOR'S MARKET.

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### *PAY.*

AN author's pay is very much like the price of milk, it depends somewhat on the market and a good deal on—the milk. Literary production may be classed in three qualities: the skim-milk, the milk, and the cream.

The skim-milk is food for swine, and even they are glutted by it to repletion. Yet in spite of the fact that there is no demand, the supply continues, an unabated flood. This watery product is pumped up from the profound fathomless depths of universal inanity, and “poured round all” like “old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste;” only it is of rather a bluish tinge, and the infinite melancholy of its wastefulness exceeds anything ever imagined by the poet.

The skim-milk is produced by the people that say: “O I never have to *think* any when I write, it comes perfectly natural to me; I just sit right down and dash it off.” And by those who say: “I don't care anything for the *rules* of writing, I just write as it comes into my head.” Or “Of course I don't *have* to write for a living; I just do it for the notion of the thing, when I haven't anything else to do.”

You yourself, dear reader, are ladling out the skim-milk when you fondly reflect: "As for me, I know that *I* have true genius, I can feel it in every fibre of my being, so that these exacting requirements of study and hard work do not apply to *me*; they apply to the other fellow. *I*, having wings, cannot of course be expected to walk or creep; let those do so that must."

**The Milk**—the second quality—finds about such a market as might be expected in a world of literary dairymen; where every alternate family maintains its own poet or essayist, perpetually on tap. Investigate and you will find that your acquaintance across the street cherishes literary aspirations similar to your own; and if you can manage to look over the fence into your neighbor's study you will find him writing a poem, or story, or essay,—something that he calls by one of these titles, and would like to sell to you. This grade of writing is furnished by those who imagine that there is a scarcity of bright ideas offered to the reading public and that consequently a few good things in a composition will save the whole of it. This writing *contains* the cream but it is not the cream; and editors have no time to do the skimming.

**The Cream**—The only quality for which there is any market—is produced by those who add much pains-taking to their natural ability; who are willing by persistent industry to do their own skimming, to take the best from their work, and send only this to market. The cream comes only of careful observation and experience added to native talent and combined with hard study and practice. This quality of any commercial product

would find a lucrative sale, but in literature the supply even of this high class of work keeps well ahead of the demand and is brought into competition with a superfine grade of reading which we might characterize as the cream of the cream; as when princes, statesmen and great soldiers come into literature. This product is the result of the highest genius or great opportunities or both. Even this can be bought with money.

There is a continual avalanche of manuscripts coming down from day to day upon the desk of every editor and manuscript "reader" in the country. Some of these offerings are inherently worthless; some have a few gleams of merit; some are excellent, but not suited to his particular purpose; some are just what he would want if he were not already over-stocked with the same goods. But of the kind he especially needs at this particular time he cannot get enough—unless he has a very deep pocket. The exceptionally popular writers get their own prices whether they publish in magazines, in newspapers, or in books, yet there are hundreds who have as much literary talent as some of the selling ones that are not popular favorites, and are obliged to take what they can get for their manuscripts in the open market.

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### THE GREAT MAGAZINES.

The great magazines, such as the *Century*, *Harper's*, *Atlantic*, and *Scribner's* (several others may also be included in this class), pay the best prices for periodical literature. One of these magazines pays at least

from fifty dollars to seventy-five dollars for a short story; and any unknown writer acquires a certain amount of reputation by appearing in a periodical of this class: it amounts practically to a certificate of high literary merit and is generally so accepted.

There is another line of periodicals which might be called, simply with reference to their market importance, the "second-class" monthlies and weeklies; most of them pay only a second rate. A few among them have a great deal of money at command and can afford to pay almost or quite as well as the "great" monthlies, but there is not that prestige accruing from an appearance in their columns. Another class of periodicals, lately springing up in tremendous numbers all over the country,—weeklies and monthlies, "juvenile" papers, "home" papers, "family" papers, "story" papers,—pays a third rate. The first rate may be set at about ten dollars per thousand words; the second rate five dollars per thousand words; the third rate about half that.

A great many of the newspapers pay by the column for "space work" as it is called. The best of the Metropolitan dailies pay from ten dollars up to twenty or thirty per column, this last rate for special articles. A column averages about fifteen hundred words. When the newspapers engage the "stars" to write for them, of course a special price is paid. Every first-class paper pays well for valuable material, but not high for what is cheap and plenty; and most of its space is occupied by its regular attaches.

Printing magazines and papers is a business; the publishers don't do it for love nor for fun. Most of them

are good-natured, genial ogres whose cardinal sin is driving a sharp bargain; and nearly all editors are exceedingly kind-hearted men, very glad to give any young writer a chance, not only for *his* sake but for the good of the periodicals themselves. It is with most editors an accepted truism that no magazine can be successful without a continually renewed infusion of "young blood," yet it must be confessed that the amount of vital fluid extracted is woefully disproportionate to the slaughter. It is sometimes even a question whether the rejoicing over one available manuscript makes up for the moaning and anguish of spirit entailed by the ninety and nine that must be declined. Yet the only way to make sure of the good *one* is to examine the entire hundred; and so the editors undertake the task with all possible cheerfulness. The training ground left open to an unknown writer is somewhat circumscribed by the fact that many periodicals are made up to a certain extent on the newspaper principle. The editor does not depend entirely upon voluntary contributions, he does not wait for something to turn up, leaving his magazine altogether at the mercy of any good chance that may happen his way. He *plans* his paper according to an ideal of his own, and then in accordance with the money and brains at his command he engages certain material ahead.

The *Century* sends Mr. Kennan and Mr. Frost to Siberia; and Mr. Cole abroad to engrave famous pictures in the great European galleries. Meanwhile the editor has a vivid idea of the value of an illustrated war history; he engages the great generals of the Civil War to write

about it. The private secretaries of President Lincoln offer a new gold mine in the shape of a historical biography. *Harper's Magazine*, beside its great artists and engravers, engages such stars as George William Curtis, Wm. D. Howells, and Chas. Dudley Warner to conduct special departments—the “Editor’s Study,” “The Easy Chair,” and “The Drawer.” *Scribner’s* arranges for a series of articles on railroads or electricity by specialists in these subjects; and for a serial story by Stevenson. The *Atlantic* may have in hand a series of papers on the Framing of the Constitution, or perhaps it has arranged for a long serial by Mrs. Oliphant. The famous short-story writers, the poets that every one is talking about, the specialists familiar with affairs uppermost in people’s minds, all add their contributions to the general plan. It is a design put together in the editor’s mind just as a house is in the mind of an architect. If you know as much about *anything* as Mr. Kennan knows about Russia, or Mr. Fiske knows about the Constitution, or Mr. Adams about Railroads; if you can write such English as Mr. Curtis writes, or tell a story as well as Stevenson; if your contribution is of good quality and in the spirit of the times, — it may fall naturally into the editor’s plan and be as acceptable to him as if you had a great name: otherwise it must take its chance in the pages that are left open to voluntary contributions, and the number of these pages varies in different magazines and in different months.

*A TALK WITH THE EDITOR OF "SCRIBNER'S."*

THE following interesting information, kindly given by the Editor of *Scribner's Magazine*, will be reassuring to young writers. Replying to my questions, he says :

Nothing pleases us more than to get hold of a new writer who is doing good work. It is the very life of a magazine that it continually renew its supply from the material offered by the new generation. Nothing can be more absurd than the idea so generally entertained that manuscripts go unconsidered from the editorial rooms of any good magazine. This does not mean necessarily that every manuscript is read from beginning to end, but enough is read to determine whether or not the offering is suitable to the purpose of the editor. He has more at stake in the decision than the author has, and cannot afford to let a really good thing slip by him through failure to give it a fair consideration.

Certain features of *Scribner's Magazine* are arranged for: such as the Railroad articles, for example; the serial story, and the "End Papers." Sometimes a writer will inquire: "Would an article on such a subject be acceptable to you, provided it was up to your standard?" To which we may reply: "Yes, the subject interests us, and we would be ready to print such a paper provided the treatment was satisfactory to our requirements."

But beyond this, and a limited number of features such as those referred to, we do not solicit contributions. We have no "regular staff." More than half the prose titles in an average number of *Scribner's* are those of voluntary contributions, and if certain names appear more frequently than others, it is because *some* writers are doing more than their share of excellent literary work.

Many good manuscripts that we would be glad to publish if the magazine were larger, are returned solely for lack of space. Counting the prose titles you will see that they average about eight or nine titles in a month, or, say, about one hundred in a year; and as we receive in that time more than four thousand prose manuscripts, it may be judged that it is out of the question to accommodate all even of the best.

You will perceive by these remarks that no spirit of favoritism stands very long in the way of a young and unknown writer's advancement. There are just two principle obstacles to be considered: First, the nature and quality of the manuscript offered; and second, the room there is for it. To begin with, a young writer must learn by experience, and training, and hard knocks, *what* to write and *how* to write; and he must moreover realize that there *is not room* enough in the magazines to print all even of the excellent writings that are offered. The unknown writer is obliged—in offering his manuscript to the great magazines—to contend with the inexorable logic of short division: two into one,—you can't.

When you become a recognized favorite with the public, you will then be "invited;" but as an unknown writer, your best way is to find out what grade of papers your work will hit, and sell all you can in that grade: for, although a single article in one of the great monthlies would pay better than two or three in another grade of periodical, yet the chances of getting in are more than proportionately smaller.

The natural and proper tendency of all young writers is to strike first at the top: of course it is right to aim for the best; that should always be your standard,—never be satisfied with anything less. But if you have only been at it four or five years,—studying, reading, thinking, and practising with all your might,—you have not yet learned the business; even the geniuses don't learn it in that time. So you will see if you imagine that you can step right in, without trying, and take the

highest prizes away from the people who have been digging at it for fifteen or twenty years,—or perhaps a lifetime,—it is a trifle conceited on your part. Experience will rub this vanity off; yet it will be a great deal easier for you if you won't try to rub up against so much experience but will be advised by one who is bruised all over with it. Unless you are unusually well qualified and fortunate, your experience is likely to run in something after this line:

You think your story is good enough for one of the great magazines; of course every young author thinks so, no matter whether it is his first story or not. You send it; it comes back,—that is, if you have inclosed the requisite stamps; and after you have sent it the rounds, and done the same with three or four other stories, you begin to get disheartened and disappointed, and rave against the cold, unappreciative world, or rather against the editor; for you are sure all the time that the world would appreciate you if the editor would only give it a chance, but he won't. He knows his business too well. He has ten thousand manuscripts a year unloaded over his desk; about half of them are probably just as good as yours,—I mean just as bad as yours. Don't feel hurt about this, because it doesn't mean that you are stupid or foolish, only that you are a beginner.

Don't be discouraged in the least; but when your story comes back from one of the great magazines, or from four or five of them, if you want to try, then send it to one of the weeklies that you think it suited to. It is very easy to get a list of these papers and to find out which ones pay.

## OTHER PERIODICALS.

Among the weekly papers of high grade that publish stories and pay well for them are the *Illustrated Christian Weekly*, the *Christian Union*, *The Independent*, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, the *Youth's Companion*. (This last, by the way, is not a children's paper as generally supposed, but intended for the whole family.) They won't any of them thank me for sending you to them, because they have now more than they can handle; yet a few bushels of manuscript per day more or less will not matter much in these great paper-mills. You will at least be courteously treated, even though you be bringing coals to Newcastle. After you have tried these, if it still comes back, take the next grade.

The papers in this class are numerous. There is a great quantity of material used. Any one with a bright idea, something new to say, or a new way of putting an old fact, stands a pretty good chance of acceptance somewhere in this grade. A cultivated literary style is not so necessary here. To write for this class of papers you needn't depend on a sudden inspiration, or long thinking over and mulling of an idea; you needn't write and rewrite, and polish, and make quite such hard work of it. Not only is the market larger here, but it is not so crowded.

If you wish to direct your efforts specially to some particular periodical, study its columns, carefully notice the style of its contributions, and the length in the class of contributions you wish to enter. If the periodical only allows five hundred words to a bird story or dog

story, or to a description of some remarkable plant, strange people, or curiosity in natural science, don't send a thousand words on any such subject. There may be matter in your article that could be used, but the editors have not time to cut it down; and back it will come to you. They can afford only a certain portion of space to your subject; they know better than you do how much. Don't try to adapt the magazine to your ideas, but adapt your ideas to the magazine.

Don't send serious matter to a comic paper, or the reverse; study the general style of the paper to which you specially aim to contribute. Or if you cannot do this, submit your manuscript to a literary bureau, which makes a business of this work.

A number of periodicals, in the second or third class as regards circulation and influence—having high literary merit, perhaps, but not a very large subscription list—frequently pay two dollars for a short article, or two dollars and upward per column of six to eight hundred words.

“Information for Authors,” an excellent book recently published by Miss Eleanor Kirk, of Brooklyn, says:

*The Sunday School Times*, and *Congregationalist* of Boston, pay liberally, the latter in proportion to the value of accepted matter. Mrs. Frank Leslie pays from three to ten dollars for prose per column. *The New York Ledger* and *The Forum*, pay usually, at least, ten dollars per thousand words, and frequently more than that, according to the value of the contribution or reputation of the author. *Lippincott's* pays from five dollars per page up, according to the estimation of the article. *Demorest's* prefers short, bright, and sometimes amusing stories and articles; the *Travelers Record* is noted for fine poetry.

For short poems, five to ten dollars is commonly paid by the best periodicals.

**Syndicates**, as they are called, pay very well for articles, if these are from writers of repute,—even better than the magazines.

*Book News*, a paper published by John Wannamaker, of Philadelphia, says that Tillottson & Sons, an English syndicate, sometimes pays five hundred dollars for a short story by a noted English writer. Ordinary magazine-writers receive from ten to twenty dollars per thousand words for short stories, and writers of established popularity sometimes receive from twenty to fifty dollars per thousand words. Writers of special articles are paid an average of fifteen dollars a column, but many receive much more than this; all depending on the popularity of the writer and the interest of the subject.

---

### MAKING A START.

Make up your mind pretty early what you want to do and find out also as early as possible what you *can* do. If you are bound to be a novelist, or poet, or romancer, look over the field; look at your own possibilities and consider if you have money enough to keep you alive for years while you are working and studying; consider if you have patience to bear the inevitable discipline and disappointments. If you are in the majority of writers, and need to earn your living at the same time you are working toward fame and reputation, you must come at it by a roundabout way perhaps,—

working up to it through half a dozen intermediate grades. With plenty of money you might go boldly up to the front door and knock, while the money would keep your toes warm until you got in; but as a poor man you would be frozen in such an attempt: your best way is to steal in through the area door into the kitchen thence gradually finding your way by easy stages into the parlor and good society.

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### NEWSPAPER WORK.

Newspaper work, if you are suited to it, is probably the best road you can travel. If you have talent, such work will help you to put this talent into the most marketable shape; it will give you a training that you can get in no other school—a training necessary even for writers of a great natural ability. If you have only ordinary literary ability, combined with any other sort of gumption, you will find more use for it on a newspaper than in any other kind of literary work. Beside, newspaper work is a *business* at which a man is paid something while he is learning. It may be a mere pittance at the start, but as soon as he is proved competent, he can make his living; while a writer of high excellence at independent authorship will starve. Eugene Camp, writing in *Harper's Young People*, says:

The pay of journalists in this country is not large, but it is as high in proportion as that of the lawyer or doctor or man of business. The promotions are slow, but they are generally upon merit. The pay of the local reporter is rarely below eight dollars per week. Sometimes he is put upon a space rate of pay to begin with, when he receives

from five to eight dollars per column for his matter. When a little more advanced, he receives a stated salary of from ten to thirty dollars per week, with an average of perhaps eighteen to twenty-two dollars. His hours are from seven to five on an evening journal, and from one to twelve on a morning one. Men who handle the telegraph news in newspaper offices get from twenty to thirty-five dollars per week, and exchange and writing editors from twenty-five to seventy dollars per week, with an average of forty to fifty dollars.

As a beginner on a newspaper, there is very little money in being merely a writer. Facts and news are what the newspaper wants. A very ordinary writer who is a good reporter,—who has a good nose for news and for interesting facts,—makes more money in a week than a much better writer who is merely an author.

There is no way of learning newspaper work except by doing it. Start wherever you can; on the lowest round if necessary, and on a good paper if possible. If you live near the publishing-office of a great metropolitan daily, try that. You will find it hard to get an opening—very hard. There will be hundreds of experienced newspaper men ahead of you, all waiting for the place you covet. An old newspaper man says, “The way to get into journalism is to break in.” Don’t wait for anything to turn up; persist in beginning somewhere immediately. Never mind if the compositor at the case gets twice the money you do to begin with: he knows his business; that makes the difference.

It has been said, in disfavor of a newspaper position, that although it is one of the places for a man quickest to earn forty dollars a week, it is also one where he will stay longest at that figure. The idea is that one may rise quickly to a certain level, but has little chance of

ever getting above it. This may be true, and yet nothing against a newspaper office. The majority of writers, when they have attained the level of forty-dollars-a-week newspaper work, have reached the best that is in them; consequently they stop. The opportunity does not stop, but *they* stop. If newspaper work is the best you are capable of, start in it, and reach your level by the shortest cut, and consider yourself lucky. If you are capable of anything higher, reportorial work will never keep you down; on the contrary, it will help you up. Newspaper work, as a means, offers both a living and a training; as an end, it is a profession, to be competent in which any man might be proud: for good newspaper writing is better literature than much magazine work that passes as such.

But there is one point which you may consider a drawback to newspaper work, in spite of all its advantages—men seldom gain fame in it. They come to be recognized and appreciated in their own profession; they become well-paid; they gain power and influence among men: but their *names*, even those at the top, are not known to the public. Run over, in your mind, half a dozen of the great metropolitan dailies; do you know the names of the editors? How many of them? And yet their pay is frequently two hundred dollars a week. How many do you suppose, among the poets and authors, whose names you see about once a day six days in the week, and three times on Sundays,—those famous authors, to follow in whose footsteps is the very height of your ambition,—how many do you suppose get one quarter that amount of money? They

have the pleasure of seeing their names in print; the delight of dwelling in an ideal existence, of rose-colored dreams and sugared sighing: but when it comes to the question of bread and butter, they cut a very small figure beside the successful newspaper man. This is probably one reason that newspaper men who are lucky enough to reach forty dollars per week are content to stay there. You can't have your cake and eat it too: these sensible men prefer to eat it.

Yes, by all means, if you are able to do so, get an opening on a newspaper. Never mind if a village local-paper is the best opportunity you have; start there. You will get training, you will be learning your trade. (You will have an opportunity of spreading yourself, as you would never be allowed to do on a city paper: you will have a chance to write all sorts of foolish things, for which you will be ashamed afterward, and will wish some one had cut you off short. This will be experience; it comes high, but we must have it.) Still, if you can begin on a city paper, it will be for you a lucky necessity that all your finest phrases are cut out by the ruthless blue-pencil. You will find it hard work to get the chance; but it is worth trying hard for.

For personal reasons you may prefer another course; you may not need the living to be found in newspaper work, and may wish to get the training in another way. You can get it in a way pleasanter and perhaps as efficient; but training you must have.

You may avoid certain kinds of drudgery, but you can never avoid hard work. You don't want to avoid it if you have genius; you would rather work than not. If

—having money—you hope to reach fame without work, that very hope is a sure indication that you lack genius; for genius is willingness to work—capacity for work.

One who has a genius for anything is willing to work like a slave at that particular thing, although he may be thoroughly lazy in everything else.

**Begin Now.**—You may be in some business, which for good reasons you cannot leave, and yet you long for literary distinction. If your business is congenial so far as it goes, you may make it a foundation for literary work. Apply yourself earnestly and you may become a specialist and gain a name as a writer about your particular business. Indeed the mastering of a specialty is the best opportunity open to an ambitious young writer. In literature, as in other callings, specialism is the tendency of the times and is the best-paid work.

Perhaps you are in the hardware line, and consider that prosaic to the last degree—as far from literature as possible. This is a mistake. Either your literary eyes have not been fairly opened, or you hate your work so much that you cannot look at it impartially. If you hate it for its own sake, you must get out of it, whether you aim for literature or not. But if you hate your business merely because it keeps you, as you suppose, from any literary work, just recognize that, instead, it may be a help to you; and remembering this, you may be able to look at it more kindly. A well-equipped hardware store seems to me a veritable nineteenth-century fairyland for observing eyes. Begin with the hinges; then take the screw-drivers, the coal-shovel, the hammer,—and other familiar substitutes for that homely

weapon, which are yet equally serviceable in pounding unfortunate thumbs. There is hardly a tool in the whole shop about which you can not write an interesting article—if you know how to write. Tell how it was made, and where, and what of; how many are used, what they are worth, the different kinds and qualities; how they came to be invented, and what people used to do without them. Probably you know some good anecdotes about them. Tell what peculiar individuals remark when they buy them; or when one makes you take them all down from the shelf, and then fails to buy.

There is nothing in itself too prosaic or commonplace for literature. Start in to-day and write your best essay on the hammer and tongs; don't make it long—five hundred words or so; get as many *facts* into those five hundred words as you possibly can; give the essay to a critical friend, or to a professional critic, who may cut it to pieces, cut your feelings all up, and then charge you fifty cents. Pay it and thank him. Then write another essay on “barb-wire fences,”—I mean *about* them. There is surely material enough in your shop, your store, your office,—wherever you may be,—out of which to create good literature, if you have the eyes to see and the tongue to tell. You may not be able to write much; but a little, regularly—in off-hours—will give you practice. And when it comes to fame, it is not quantity but quality that counts: *a little of the best* is enough.

*SPECIAL ARTICLES.*

**The Household.**—Perhaps the women writers seem left out in this summary. That would be a pity; for just now they are the most voluminous contributors both to the press and the waste-basket. If a young woman wants to get a start in literature let her stick right by the home, if she is fortunate enough to have one, and make home work and home life her literary specialty. Articles about housework and home-work are in greater demand, almost, than any other kind of writing at present. The popular family periodicals fairly bristle with articles telling about cooking, dressmaking, housekeeping; and dealing with domestic cares generally. If you are a good housekeeper, there is no reason why you should not make marketable writing out of your daily experience. This field perhaps makes up to women for the disadvantage they are at in the reportorial field.

There is an extensive range of subjects of which women have almost a monopoly. Such subjects as the care of the sick, and the care of children, constitute in themselves a literature. A new departure often creates a demand. The little magazine *Babyhood* answered a need, real, yet almost unnoticed until this publication appeared. There is also opportunity for new work in old fields. Cook-books were not unknown when Marion Harland wrote "Just How"; but it was a new treatment of the subject that made the book so popular. It did not refer housewives to the dictionary to find out how

to bake bread, and economical ones were not appalled at the expense of ingredients.

**Writing for Children** is a profitable specialty. The name is legion of periodicals devoted exclusively to the young. Sunday-school libraries are constantly in search of suitable books for the young. The need will continue, and many authors have gained both fame and cash by devoting themselves to this line of work.

There is a market for those brief and witty jingles—tossed off easily—that happen to be just long enough and wide enough to fill a certain desired space in the make-up of some periodicals. The editor of *Wide Awake*, for example, uses a great many little bits of verses of one stanza, with lines long enough to stretch way across the page—these are put in to fill out the page when a prose article falls short; but they must be bright and witty, and their rhyme and jingle ought to be faultless.

**Good Jokes**, too, have a brisk market—particularly if you can illustrate them yourself. But remember: *Good jokes*. Of any others, beware!

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### ILLUSTRATING.

If you have any talent for drawing, by all means cultivate it. If you can learn to draw well enough to illustrate your own articles, the chance of their acceptance is very largely increased. This does not mean that a poor drawing will help to sell a poor article, nor *vice versa*. But a good article accompanied by good drawings carries a strong recommendation.

## GENERAL ARTICLES.

On an up-town street, the other day, I discovered a man with a two-feet-long gimlet attacking a tipsy-looking telegraph pole that seemed to be otherwise quite inoffensive. He had just executed a skillful lunge into the tender susceptibilities of the pole, when I observed his operations ; and on inquiring found that he was an agent of the Union Telephone Company, which keeps a record of every pole and its condition. In order to be sure of this he was obliged to probe the gimlet down into the base of the pole, as the decay always begins just beneath the surface of the ground.

“This pole,” said he, “is good for about a year,” and he entered the fact in a little book; “but there is another down on the Bowery, that looks better than this—it appears to be in a first-class condition—yet in fact it is rotted almost clear through and is liable to fall any minute, carrying death and destruction with it.”

“Just the text I want,” said I, “and at my first opportunity I will preach a little sermon from it.” Meantime, it was a good newspaper item. A little later, passing a button factory I wondered: “What has been written about button-making?” There were two good articles in half an hour.

When you see anything unusual, or anything you don’t understand, inquire all about it; you are likely to find something good there; keep your eyes and ears open; and write it up while it is hot.

There is a rich mine of material in the public libraries for that kind of general articles that fills so much

space in newspapers and "family" periodicals. If you have only *learned the trade*, and know how to get the juice out of these facts, presenting the condensed extract in a palatable shape, you might sit in a library day after day and turn out interesting reading by the yard. (But it must be cut off in much shorter lengths to be acceptable: four or five hundred words is ample, and the shorter the better.) This may be called standard material.—Facts that have been told a thousand times before, and yet are always interesting if told in a new way and combined with new facts and examples from your scrap-book; perhaps just as interesting as new facts to those that never heard them before, and yet one could never undertake the amount of investigation and labor it would be to gather the material himself, and he does not need to. All this work has been done for him. He only needs to use the work of others. Of course this does not pretend to be the highest grade of literature, neither will it command a high price, but such vast quantities of it are read that some of it must sell if *well done*. The great point is to put it briefly, in readable shape, so that it really appears like something new.

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### TRANSLATIONS.

Of these it is not worth while to say much because they have almost no market value. There is no encouragement to good authors to translate, and poor ones get almost no pay for it. As to what constitutes a good translator, the whole matter is summed up in a reply

said to have been given by Mrs. Wister, the popular translator of German novels. "The question is not whether you can read German, but whether you can write English."

That of course is the question in the whole business.

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### *DR. HOLMES'S ADVICE TO A YOUNG VERSE-WRITER.*

To aspiring young poets I can give no more fitting suggestion or advice than that of Dr. Holmes, in a private letter written to me in 1876, and which, at my special request, he kindly permits me to publish here. Although written so long ago, it is now not only as true as then but, if possible, even more so.

My experience with young writers of verse has not been as encouraging as I could wish it had been. The market for this product is glutted to torpor. Publishers are throwing contributions, not without a certain amount of literary cleverness, into their waste-baskets by the hundreds and thousands.

The advice I commonly give to aspirants is this:

Take a signature, simple but distinctive—not affected or pretentious, or sentimental at any rate—and stick to it. If you have genius, or even marketable talent, you can find the public, no matter where you publish. If you write for a local paper, and your efforts do not attract the attention of critics or publishers, you may feel pretty sure you have not met a public want, and therefore cannot compete with those who do. A good poem or story or essay in a local paper is sure to be extracted and brought into notice more or less. Half a dozen good poems, stories, essays under the same signature, will make the author known to the whole country and set the publishers bidding for him.

But there is no royal road to fame or fortune in authorship; and it is

only here and there, one in hundreds, whose writings pay for his stationery. I dislike telling these odious truths, but they are the simple results of a long and large experience.

The facility of versifying has come to be so exceedingly common an accomplishment, that a vast amount of presentable rhyme is written which has no market value whatever.

If you thoroughly believe in yourself, all you have to do is to keep on studying the best modes of the style of verse you most fancy, and trying until you settle the question to your own satisfaction. It is an uphill piece of work, but it is what we all have to submit to.

The delusion which we all feel—I as well as those I am called upon to criticise—with reference to what we have written, is very great and very subtle. We know either the pains it has cost us, on the one hand, or, on the other, the glow of enthusiasm with which our verses seemed to write themselves; and in either case it is next to impossible to judge them fairly until the brain has got cool.

The poorest profession or trade affords a better prospect of gaining a competence than literary work, except to one in a thousand. I have known a young woman who supported herself by writing stories at five dollars a week. She had better have been at service in any good family. I have had more than the average of success in literary labor, but I have been also a drudging teacher of anatomy for thirty years and more.

Coleridge says a literary man should always have a profession, if I remember correctly. So I repeat my counsel: Improve your faculties of composition to any extent, but do not let it interfere with your daily duties in some productive occupation.

Many poets who have left names behind them have begun by imitating others, and, at first, gave small evidence of genius. Lord Byron's "Hours of Idleness" show very little of the genius he developed. The criticism on Wordsworth when he first published, began, if I remember right, "This will never do."

If a man has the root of the matter in him, it will show itself in due time. If he has not, no *boosting*, as we boys used to say, will get him over the fence he wants to climb.

Writing poetry is just like making statues or painting pictures: if you

are born with the gift you can do it; if not, it makes no difference what you think of your marble or canvas, or what your friends say about it, in their wish to be pleased. It is a very curious fact, of which I have somewhere spoken in print, that the excitement and sense of self-admiration with which a poem is written are unfortunately no measure of its excellence—just as with painting: I have known artists in love with their own work, which had really no value whatever. Horace says one should keep his poem to the ninth year. If any writer will do that he will be his own critic, and judge himself quite as sharply, it may be, as another would judge him.

A great deal is demanded of the poet in our day, and nothing but genius, study, and practice can be relied on to meet the exactions of the reading public.

If, after this wholesome caution, you will insist on marrying the Muse, accept from me the benediction of the illiterate notary, who being called upon for the first time to administer the marriage service, and feeling the necessity of some impressive formula, closed the ceremony as follows: "I now pronounce you man and wife, and may God have mercy on your souls."

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### THE MARKET FOR SHORT-STORIES.

Probably a good short-story is the quickest-selling piece of pure literature in the market; but mind, a *good* short-story. Most young writers know that short-stories sell and love to write them; consequently an enormous number are written—good, bad, and worse—and a surprisingly large percentage printed; but only the *best* get into the "great" magazines. Out of ten thousand manuscripts sent to one of these magazines in one year, it is safe for a Yankee to guess that five thousand of

these were short-stories. Of course very few could be printed there—only the cream of the cream—yet I venture to say the editor wished there was more of it. The wonder is that there is so little of the very first quality in the line of short-stories. There is of course a deluge of the skim-milk grade; and plenty that is “fair,” and “pretty” good, and “good.” But to these “good” short-stories, that might with a little more thought—perhaps a little more waiting, or a little more genius—be made the very best, strangely enough, only here and there in rarely exceptional cases has the little more thought, study and genius been added. The few people that are capable of this superlative effort and willing to take the pains, are the only ones whose stories are scarce. The great body of short-stories get into the second and third grade periodicals, and into the newspapers.

About two thousand words is called the most marketable length for short-stories. Many of them are longer, up to five thousand in the periodicals that have space, and some of the newspaper stories are telescoped into half a column in a fashion that is amusingly ingenious; most of them are love stories: The hero and heroine being born to strange fortunes, attain the age of indiscretion; meet by a remarkable chance; are mutually smitten, go through various stages of hope, wavering, jealousy, despair; and final restoration to each other’s arms and a big pile of money—all in some seven or eight hundred words.

Try and write such a yarn yourself in that space and see how little you know of the art of short-story writ-

ing, which is said to consist mainly in knowing what to leave out. It is simply amazing how much *can* be left out yet in telling the story so that the reader will follow it with interest. He may even be thrilled—a little half-column thrill—which is about the space a newspaper can afford; and it will pay you perhaps from two to five dollars for the story, if it pays you at all. The probability is that if your story was any good, it was scissored out of some other periodical without the newspaper paying anything, even the compliment of a thank you. However, turn about is fair play: the best plots in the world—and plenty of them—you can scissor out of the newspapers every day. Simply the facts, the news; you can get anything you want: love stories, tragedies, peculiar adventures; situations unheard of in fiction, yet presented as a simple matter of fact by the correspondent in some obscure country village. Stories in this shape are the *news*, and that is what the papers want. They would much rather pay a good hack-writer to go out and get the bottom facts concerning a suicide or an elopement than pay a purely literary man for an ideal romance that takes three times the space and does not make sensational reading.

Editors are willing to “pay for space,” as they say. Don’t misunderstand that phrase; they are not willing to pay for the space you occupy, but for that you *leave vacant*. In other words, your room is better than your company. Even though you be a first-class writer—and the editor will pay for your company as far as it goes, he thanks you more for a good short-story of two thousand words than for one of five thousand.

*Harper's Young People* frequently uses, when obtainable, juvenile short stories, not exceeding seven or eight hundred words. It is easy enough to get verses and stories of the required length, but they lack the necessary merit. It is easy enough to get meritorious stories and poems, but they are not the right length; the point is to combine both requirements.

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### SERIAL STORIES.

If you can learn the art and artifice of writing a good, taking, serial story your everlasting fortune is made—as far as it can be made in literature. “Good” is used in the commercial sense; not necessarily a story of fine literary merit, but simply one of such absorbing interest that the reader is constrained beyond his better judgment—fairly compelled, in fact—to take “the next number;” which is the one thing above all that periodical publishers desire. The late E. P. Roe understood this business as well as any one, though it would not be fair to presume that he turned out his work with the instalment plan specially in view. But whatever the intention, the fact remains that the hero—or heroine of Mr. Roe’s excellent stories was almost invariably up a tree at the end of each instalment; and how he or she was ever to get down again, was the question with the reader which developed into an eager, hungry, insatiate longing for “the next number.”

You may think this a very easy trick. Not so.

The secret of the continued and cumulative interest

of a serial story does not always lie in a thrilling situation at the end of each instalment; frequently, a current of simple strong human feeling is all that is needed. This stream may be interrupted anywhere, and yet wherever taken up will resume its course with unabated force.

If you read the most popular novel of the day, the one that people are reading because they like it and not merely because it is the fashion, you will probably find it superficial, untrue to real life, at least untrue to the life that is real with the majority of people that are reading it. But they delight in it just the same, which goes to show that people like to live in an ideal world. They turn to novels and stories, not to be led back into the grinding commonplaces of their daily existence, but to escape for a while into another world, that they have in fact never seen, and probably never will or can. Yet, this story in spite of its surface unreality must be true at core to the heart-hopes, and sympathies of human nature; though not telling how people really live and what they actually do and say, yet showing how they long to live; what they would do and say if they only could.

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### *WHY THAT MANUSCRIPT CAME BACK.*

Some young writers try by various schemes, designs, and contrivances to catch an editor in neglect of his duty as the young writer understands it, for of course every aspiring author understands the editor's business better than he does himself. These vigilant authors some-

times stick two or three pages of their manuscript together slightly or lay something between the leaves, and when the manuscript comes back undisturbed still sticking together, it is considered proof positive that the editor does not attend to business. It is of course an indication that he has not waded through the whole manuscript,—and to his credit be it said.

Most of the periodicals that receive great quantities of manuscript have three readers. The first extracts and returns the “skim-milk;” the second sends back the “milk;” then the managing editor or “chief” distinguishes and retains what is, for his purpose, the cream of the cream. Very likely you suppose that if your article only came directly under his eye it would stand a better chance of acceptance. The chances are that it would be thrown out quicker than it is; for his assistants know his ideas and wants and are well-qualified deputies.

The skim-milk editor, as we will call him, opens a manuscript and reads the first sentence. It may be something like this:

“‘Susie,’ exclaimed a wan, pale woman, leaning in the doorway of a little cottage overhung with roses and woodbine, ‘bring in the clothes-pins!’”

He doesn’t need to read any further. This pale, wan woman may be a very interesting character—to *you*; but she isn’t to the people who read *this* editor’s paper, and he knows it; he knows what they like better than you do. He knows too that they have no appetite for clothes-pins, and declines to offer them any such wooden entertainment.

Perhaps the next essay begins:

"The time was midnight; the scene was a lone highway on which the moon shone placidly down through the waving branches of the tall elm trees overhead. A solitary figure might be seen stealing along—"

The manuscript reader stops. He wants no moonshine, no solitary figures or waving branches. The next two pages may be stuck together with mucilage; the next three may have locks of hair laid between them. You will get them back just as they were sent. The hair will not have uncurled or changed color in the least.

You ask, "*What* is the trouble with these stories? *Why* does the editor decide against them at the first sentence?" In the case of the wan, pale woman and the clothes-pins, you must see—if you have any sense of the ridiculous—that it appears strikingly here in the sudden change from the pathetic to the commonplace. It is evident that the writer is not a literary artist, else he would never start in this ridiculous fashion. We will suppose that the story goes on to tell how the young girl kept house, and swept the room, and made pancakes, and generally proved herself a good housekeeper. Or perhaps she pulled a little boy out of the river by the hair, and earned a reward of twenty dollars, with which she bought her mother a new dress. This is highly commendable of course and may be interesting to the writer, who knew it for a fact; but it is tame, inconsequential, of no account to readers generally. Not merely because it is an uneventful story, but because it is an uneventful story *poorly told*.

Here is another story of a little boy whose grandfather wanted him to go to work and hoe corn in the garden,

while the little fellow persisted in staying "up garret" and reading books. In the development of the plot the boy manages to lose himself somewhere in the woods, or under the barn door, from which predicament he is only discovered and rescued after agonizing suspense on the part of the conscience-stricken grandfather. In future the little boy is allowed to read his books. This, again, is a depressingly ordinary experience; there is nothing in the motive itself to rouse or interest people; it needs a skilful artist to do the *telling* of a tame story of this sort, to give it any "go." Here are a few opening sentences which fail to tempt the average editor to read the second page:

"When I was a little girl I was always teasing my mother and aunts to tell me about the things they did when they were little girls. Now that I am grown up it has occurred to me that somewhere there may be children who may like to know about some of the events of *my* childhood—"

The writer should have begun with one of the events and left out all this prologue.

"It was early twilight. The ocean waves lapped peacefully the shores of Normandy."

This seems rather a long lap considering that the intention is peaceful; what part of Normandy?

"It is evening of St. Valentine's Day and there is a party at Grandpa's for the young people. Lights are shining from every window of the rambling old Massachusetts farm-house."

Why are farm-houses always described by young writers as "rambling"?

"Well, my dears, we have had a very pleasant hour and I am glad to have met you all. Indeed I am."

“‘Well, so am I.’

“The minister smiled. ‘Thank you; and some day you must all come and see us at the parsonage.’”

We will; but not to-day.

Now these opening phrases are not by any means intolerable or disagreeable; they are simply ordinary. Something excellent may follow, but it isn't indicated at the start. These are not by any means glaring examples of the flatness, tameness, uneventfulness characterizing so many stories throughout and which appear from the very beginning hopelessly common and ordinary. There is nothing behind the words; there is nothing beyond the ink and the paper upon which they are written; even if passably well told, *there is nothing to tell*. This may be called fault number one: The manuscript came back because the writer *had nothing to say*. You will perhaps demur that some of our most interesting writers have no story to tell. The answer is: They *ought* to have. Undoubtedly there are literary artists who could tell in a way that people would want to read, how a country boy went down town to the grocery store and bought a peck of potatoes. But such writers are few and far between. Probably neither you nor I are one of them. Unless you have a good strong story to tell and something new and bright to say you would better hold your peace. In fact, the masters of style seldom undertake, as many novices do, to write something about nothing. It is true here that “Fools step in where angels fear to tread.” The few writers who *can* talk interestingly on the most ordinary subjects usually wait until they have a story worth telling; while those who

could not do justice to the best opportunities are always ready to write volumes about clothes-pins, and picket-fences, and window-glass, and corn-meal, and other dispiriting themes. Any one of these subjects might by itself be made briefly interesting, *if you knew all about it*; but no matter how numerous may be the things you *don't* know, you cannot make them aggregate anything interesting.

Now the solitary figure stealing into the moonlight: Suppose you are the author, and I ask:

“Where did this happen?”

“Well,” you will say, “It happened,—Oh I don’t know—nowhere in particular; it may have happened anywhere.”

“How old was the man?”

“A youngish man.”

“How many years?”

“I don’t know exactly.”

“How tall; feet and inches?”

“I can’t precisely say.”

“Who was this lone highwayman?”

“Oh well, no one specially. I did not have any one in mind particularly. It was an imaginary person.”

“What time of year was it?”

“I didn’t think of that.” And as I go on asking questions it appears that this person is nobody, the story is located nowhere; and it happened—never.

“But,” you ask, “need I have a particular place in mind, or particular person?”

Yes, you *need*. It is not necessary that there *be* any such place or person actually in existence; but it *is* neces-

sary that they be *in mind*, and so real to *you* that you could, at need, answer any questions about them as categorically as if they had an actual existence. That is what imagination is for. It is no remarkable faculty to string words together about a lot of nothings. The story must be about *something*.

You may base your figure upon some one you have known in life and change and idealize it. Or your description may apply to some locality with which you are familiar. This too you may alter, or enlarge, or extend; or you may simply think out your characters and localities; but in the latter case your thinking out must be so thorough that it is all *real to you*, otherwise it is unreal to your readers. This *unreality* shows at the very beginning of the "moonshine" story; and we will call it fault number two. You don't know your own story; of course you can't tell it. It is possible to make your story appear real to unversed readers when the facts are not actually true to life. But, to be successful even with these readers, the facts must seem real to yourself.

Now here is a story about a little orphan boy who sets out to make his living on a canal-boat; he succeeds famously, and that is all the story. It is, however, so well told, the style is so simple and unaffected, with a touch of delicate humor, and it is so real in every line,—being evidently based on actual experience,—that the average reader is sure to enjoy it; but—here is the fatal *but*—there are long stretches of description and of retrospection in the story; the "leading up" to the principal events of the story is too detailed and deliberate. This tires the patience of the reader who wants to come right

at the business of the plot. There are four or five hundred words devoted to a mother's last illness and death, explaining how the orphan became an orphan; it is pathetic, it is real, it is well told; but it is not to the purpose of the story, which, owing to this and other like deviations, spreads out beyond the limits of a short-story without attaining the power and force necessary to a long one. We will number this, fault three.

The editor may not feel at liberty to cut this all out, beside he hasn't time; and he can get plenty of stories in which these unfruitful stretches have already been cut out by the author himself.

Probably the fault which condemns the greatest number of manuscripts, containing genuine merit, is length disproportionate to the interest of the subject. Don't suppose because a great sensation is created in your household when the calf breaks away from his tree in the orchard and gives you a long chase to recapture him, that any such excitement will be felt in the mind of the average reader to whom you relate the incident. You feel like talking half an hour about it, but he does not want to listen; perhaps if you will sum the whole affair up in a paragraph of half-dozen lines, he will smile, and say, "that's funny," and renew his subscription to the paper; but when you spread it out as long as you think it ought to be, he begins to yawn at the very start, throws the paper under the table, says he can't "waste time over such trash," and fails to renew. An editor knows how the reader will take it, so, back comes your funny manuscript about the calf.

Although the present reading generation craves facts,

it wants them—all but those of immediate human interest—in small doses and very much condensed. People of this busy day must take their information in triple extracts, or go without it. You may have something to tell about the mountains of the Moon, or deep-sea life; but these facts don't come near enough home to take up more than a few lines—those few but no more will be read and approved. Whereas if it had been a romantic escapade in the Jones family right across the way, or a suicide in the next block, you might safely have made it a thousand words, and people would call for more; because this is life and death, and it is near at hand; but the heavens, the mountains, the sea, and all that in them is, have only a distant interest, except for special students.

The rules of proportion apply also to fiction dealing with human interests; even these are of relative importance: Don't take a hundred words telling how your heroine tied her bonnet. If the subject of your article is, "How a woman ties her bonnet," do justice to your theme. But if it is a love story, or an elopement, drive right at it immediately and leave out everything else.

Size up your subject at the start; consider *what* you want to tell: Is it a story exclusively of action? Don't waste words, then, on dress, eyes, hair, and all that; don't take much space telling what the characters *intended* or *imagined*; but come right at what they *did*. Is it a character sketch you wish to write, showing the strange vagaries or imaginings of some unique personality? Then you may tell what he thought, for his thinking is the main part of your story.

Some writers having a good story well in mind added to the faculty of driving directly at the subject, with considerable aptness in choice of words—are yet seriously guilty of so throwing off their spirited phrases wrong end foremost and inside out that even a careful reader is obliged to go over nearly every sentence two or three times to understand the situation. This fault is common with wide-awake vigorous unaffected writers. It sometimes condemns a manuscript with a fastidious critic. When this misconstruction and involution of sentences is the result of affectation, or carelessness, or stupidity, and is not offset by shining virtues, it is unpardonable. Call it failing number four.

And some stories quite unexceptionable may be useless because they have been so often told already. Perhaps you have a strictly original idea about a hen that hatched ducks. You think it will make such a bright little story for a juvenile paper. It seems to you indeed quite a brilliant thought and full of possibilities, but I can assure you that duck-hatching hen has been clacking ever since the creation of the world; and probably a dozen stories a week are turned out with this idea as the mainstay of the plot.

The same is true of the talking knives and forks and of the thimble and bodkin who get into an imaginary altercation. It is a fashion among young writers to make inanimate things converse or relate their experiences, for example: "The Autobiography of a Button-Hook," beginning, "I first saw the light, etc." The intention frequently is to convey useful information in an entertaining way, but the result usually is information

bewitched and entertainment begrudging. It is an old fashion and a bad one left over from the primers of our grandfathers. If the article were entitled "How a Button-Hook is Made," and told *just that*, it might be acceptable. Dr. Hale says his old music-teacher used to say, "Think of A and strike D;" but that in writing, it is never the thing to think of one thing and strike another. Either think of a story and write it or think of button-hooks and write button-hooks. And, while we are on the subject: Don't flag a train. It may be very heroic, but it has been done so often! This is now positively "called in." Readers are weary of the brave creature that flags a train.

Let us have a recapitulation of the reasons—some of them—why manuscripts are rejected:

First: There is nothing worth telling; the writer has no ideas. The remedy is: Use your eyes, ears, and wits, to see, hear, perceive, or think out something worth saying; briefly: Know *something*.

Second: The writer has no familiarity with his own subject; it isn't real to him; consequently he can't make it real or interesting to any one else. Remedy: Look into your subject, whether fact or fiction, until you know all about it; in short: *Know something*.

Third. The MS. is overweighted with unimportant details, digressions, diversions, retrospections. The kite has "too much tail." Remedy: Cut it off.

Fourth. The sentences are involved and misconstrued, they begin in the middle and go both ways at once, like a "double-headed Dutchman;" brilliant but puzzling. Remedy: Learn your trade.

Fifth. Your story has been told before. Try again.

Sixth. It is all right, but there isn't room. The printer's chases are not made of India-rubber. Keep on trying.

It isn't necessary to look as far as the great masters to find instances of the right way to begin. Here is the opening of a story by a school-boy under eighteen:

"Texas now and Texas fifteen years ago are two entirely different things. There was no law to speak of then, and what there was did not deter evil-doers in the least. Murder, robbery, and horse-thieving, with all the petty crimes which follow in their wake, were common occurrences, and unless a fellow was pretty handy with a pistol he was at a discount. I remember one exciting incident of some years ago, which is as vivid in my mind as though it happened yesterday."

There is nothing remarkable in the way of literary style here, the story may be crude and unfinished; but the point is, the writer has a story to tell, and he lets us know it from the word "go!"

"For several years I have been employed as a post-office inspector. During the autumn of 1886, I was dispatched by the head of the division, to which I belong, to a town which we will call Berne, to investigate a loss which had occurred there. The case as reported was substantially as follows :"

This is a recent *Youth's Companion* story. Do you perceive the flavor of actuality? This is why it was printed and why the paper is read.

Here is a local picture of *somewhere*, and of a time that is *some when*. It is the opening of another *Youth's Companion* story:

A great cloud of dust was drifting above the twisted cedars on the east slope of the Tuerto Mountains one sunny August morning nearly fifty years ago.

Here is a bit of spirited reality from John Preston True's story "On Board the *Squid*" in *Treasure-Trove Magazine*:

"Spang!!!"

What a clear, resonant ring the gun had! It leaped backward as though it would follow the lanyard, then plunged forward again, while a light cloud of smoke hung like a wraith over the forecastle, and melted away past jib and stay.

One needn't ask if that sentence was written from familiar experience.

Here is the beginning of a story by a young lady undergraduate:

"Miss Dorothy Willowby was an old maid. People said that somebody had broken her heart years before, but if this were true it had been mended long ago, and she always took great pains to keep the cracked side down."

"That is a bright, original sentence," the reader says to himself; "there must be something good here." And he reads on.

One of the "Sketches by Boz" begins:

"How goes the night? St. Giles' clock is striking nine?"

There is reality for you.

The best magazines want all the virtues combined, and are willing to pay for them. But a story to be acceptable in *any* paying paper should have at least one strong

point, and that very strong. If the story's only virtue be a good plot, every line, every word, must go to the plot; all useless details, wordy descriptions and long-winded dialogues must be cut away. If the story depends upon heroic adventure it must be adventure worth telling; lively and sensational. If it is purely a "moral" story the moral must stick right out with no chance for mistaking it. If the story expects to get through on its wit alone it needs to be exceedingly witty. If it can make no claim to any attraction save quality of literary style this must be the work of a master hand.

Some religious papers will accept a story with a good moral; even though it lack at other points. Or some other-class periodical will often be glad to get a story with a good, strong, lively plot even if the style is not the best.

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### *YET, "WHY?"*

Although man does not live by bread alone, he lives principally by bread and butter and the other things to eat. He perhaps likes to invite his soul at times, but he must look after his stomach, which announces itself punctually without waiting for an invitation. He must have clothing to cover his back even though he has to go without the latest novel, or the very sweetest poem ever written. Remember this. This is why the bread-and-butter affairs of life are the money-making ones. This is why the artist comes out at the little end of the financial horn.

The man who writes to people's hearts and minds and souls, sweetening, elevating, ennobling, will receive their love, gratitude and admiration, but they pay their hard, round dollars to the man who brings the bread and butter, and the meat; the one who furnishes the clothing and the boots and shoes. Remember this.

Thus you will see that the author's market is no market at all, in the commercial sense. It is simply a very narrow opening—a slender opportunity for a few of the best writers to earn a bare existence, as writers. The second-best may possibly pay for their postage stamps and stationery; but the great mass of apprentices can expect nothing but starvation.

Why is this? Because writing, primarily, is a pleasure just as talking is. Everybody wants to talk, and to hear himself talk; everybody wants to write and to see his writing in print; as Stevenson says, you must not expect to gain your living by a pleasure.

You will, perhaps, object—"Some people make their living by it; why not I?" Yes, some people might make a living by rolling off a log—which is proverbially the easiest thing in the world—because they could do the rolling so gracefully, so pleasingly, that other people want to pay for it.

To acquire this ability;—to make your own pleasure the profit of others, for which they are willing to pay—your pleasure must be turned into work, and unless you are willing to make it so, you can never hope to get paid for it. Don't suppose because you write with ease, it is any evidence that you write well. So you can

stand on the corner of the street and whistle without trying; but people wont pay you for it.

The time may come when, after long training, you will be able to write well, and also with ease; just as the accomplished pianist can improvise, or execute difficult music at sight. To this artist it has *now* indeed become a pleasure, and he is paid for it; but consider the long years of hard exacting unpaid drudgery that came first! All those years it was work. So it is with writing; it is a trade to be learned by hard work; it cannot be done in any other way. This is the one thing that I am most anxious to impress on the literary aspirant. If you cannot understand this, to start with, nothing but disappointment is before you.

If you want to write because you consider it an easy way to make a living; and imagine you have inherent genius, which will enable you to do well without trying; if you wildly suppose that literary work is a short and easy road to fame, and fortune; or if you even believe that with more than average good luck—yes far beyond average good luck—you will ever gain wealth as an author,—I give you good sound wholesome advice in one word:—*Quit!*

But if you are willing to take off your coat, roll up your sleeves and go to work; to dig and delve and perspire and study and think, and then go at it and work, work, work again with all your might; knowing all the time that the chances are largely in favor of your remaining unknown beyond a small circle, and of getting a smaller cash recompense than comes to the average dry-goods clerk; if you are willing to do all

this because you love the work; because you want to be an artist; because you have something to say, that you must say, even though you go bare-foot, and preach from an empty stomach; if you are willing to do all this, and marry this beggar, Art—come good, come ill—for pure love—I will give you equally good advice in another word: *Write!* Because you must learn to write well; and the only way to learn to do is by doing. You cannot learn to write by reading, and thinking, and studying, and criticising the writings of others. All this may be good in its way, but nothing will take the place of practice. Learn to write by writing—learn to write well by writing well every time—the best you can; only in this way can you learn to write well at command.

Some of our writers, who have reached the top round, have begun with an independent fortune, to back them, and have thus been able to write, continually, whatever came into their heads. Of course, they have been able to study and think; but, more important, they have had the opportunity of repeated careful expression.

It is not at all important that your work be printed; no amount of printing will bring reputation until a long apprenticeship has made your writing the best; then a very little of it printed may bring you instant and lasting fame. You cannot by any amount of printer's ink run your reputation ahead of your merit.

## LITERATURE AND BUSINESS.

There is one thing to be said that brightens the prospect a little—authors as a class are getting more money now than they ever did before; because authorship is being combined with business in this age more than ever. And there is a chance for you to make some money if you have combined with your love of literature, a good head for business. You will observe that this is a sort of serving Art and Mammon. You can hardly expect to be a good artist in this way; yet you may make some money, and perhaps that is what you want, after all.

It does seem that there ought to be some way, with all the books that are read—good, bad, and indifferent—for the authors of them to get some sort of proportionate cash payment; it is fair enough that if people don't want to read your book or article you should not be paid for it no matter how much you want to write it; but when people do want to read and do pay for it, it seems that the larger proportion of the cash should go into the pocket of the author, and I do believe that if the majority of authors who are now making fortunes for publishers would only have a little business common sense and courage, they would get pay more nearly commensurate with their share of the work.

Let me suggest that you print your own book: if there is any success, *you* get it; if failure, *you* get it; even this will be good discipline, and will teach you a more reasonable understanding of the publisher's real position. But don't be discouraged; make a small venture

at first; if it fails, try again; stick to it as a business man would do, until you are satisfied either that you cannot write a good book, or cannot sell one. It is a pity that any man with ordinary business ability should not have the benefit of it simply because it is his misfortune to be a writer of books rather than a maker of jack-knives or window-blinds. I believe there is some solid foundation for the complaint of authors against publishers taking the lion's share of the profits; and that the time is right upon us when the majority of authors will take matters into their own hands with a little business shrewdness, and balancing the profits with the losses will come out ahead as the publishers now do. The only reason why this should not be is the possible truth of the commonly-accepted notion that authors are merely gifted lunatics whom it is the charitable duty of the public to keep just above starvation, but not to re-quite as it does rational members of society.

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### BOOK-MAKING.

If you wish to combine literature and business, book-making is your opportunity, and just what sort of book-making depends, of course, upon your special abilities and resources. If your literary talent preponderates, you may, by making a very good book, manage to push it to a successful sale by the exercise of only ordinary business talent. If, on the other hand, your talents are stronger in a business way, you may manage, by unusual enterprise, to create a good sale for an ordinary

book. But, as you never can tell what your strong points are until you test them, it is better to begin on a very small scale in either direction. Don't start in with a big novel, for if it fails—woe be unto you, either as a novelist or publisher. Better begin with a modest venture in the way of a compilation; putting together in presentable form what others have written. But beware of fiction. Publishing fiction is too much like gambling: the novel or romance or tale, which you publish, *may* be wanted by everybody; yet the chances are it will be wanted by nobody. While hard facts, carefully sifted and conveniently presented, can safely count on a certain even though a limited market.

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### COMPILATIONS.

In order to realize what an immense amount of work is done in this direction you have only to take a look about your own library, however modest it may be, or your own sitting-room table. You may think you have no books worth mentioning, but you will doubtless find among half a dozen books, four or five that have been put together,—made up of other books. Here is what I find in just turning around to look at the few stray books on the table beside me. "Chips from Dickens," a collection of his best short sayings; "Gems of Catholic Thought," a selection of the best brief quotations from Catholic writers; "English as she is Taught," made up of a lot of answers to examination questions given by pupils in the public schools; "How Man Pro-

poses," consisting of famous love scenes from fiction and the drama; "Afternoons with the Poets," made up of famous sonnets from Petrarch to the present, and "Practical Recitations." These are nearly all along familiar lines. If you go to any public library you will find thousands of others on subjects that would surprise you.

If you want to make a successful compilation don't follow the beaten paths; find something new, something suggested by your own line of work; on subjects with which you are familiar. Don't make a collection of poems, nor a recitation book; unless you are a school teacher and perceive a special need.

(Take some line of facts that are always interesting to a certain number, and in which a considerable amount of information has already been printed; let it be a subject with which you yourself are familiar: write down all you know about it that you think is worth telling, then get together the other books on the subject, such of them as you think have good material in them; skim from them carefully the cream; put it with what you have yourself written, and you have a book which may be of practical value to a certain number, and will bring you probably some cash returns.)

Yet there must be some reason for publishing this book. I do not mean *your* reason,—that you want to sell it,—but there must be some reason in the needs of those to whom you offer it. You must have some new light on the subject; something to say that has not been said pointedly enough. Or the main object of your compilation must be to give people the substance of

perhaps a dozen other books on the subject, without the trouble of reading them all. Of course, in order to do this successfully you must know something about the subject; and the suggestion, that you write all *you* think about it first, is to the end that your book may have a flavor, at least, of originality. If you read first what others have said the danger is that you will merely paraphrase their ideas unless you have had time to digest and assimilate their information and make it your own.

**Naming** an article, or poem, or book, or story is an important matter. Let your title be simple and brief as possible, yet describing exactly what you have to tell.

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### BOOK-MANUSCRIPTS.

What has been said about periodical contributions applies to book manuscripts. Publishers engage professional "readers" to decide upon the value of any manuscripts offered. The majority of them are worthless; some have more or less merit; a few appear to the "reader" worth publishing by his house. The usual terms are ten per cent of the gross sales to the author. The publisher then—after allowing to "the trade" thirty or forty per cent "off"—has the balance, to pay all expenses of printing, advertising, and putting the book on the market; to pay for his risk, for the use of his money; and partly to make good his losses on other unfortunate ventures. Authors do not usually appreciate the burden carried by the publisher, and imagine that he always gets the lion's share; yet forty-nine times out of fifty

the arrangement cited proves an equitable division of spoils between author and publisher; but the fiftieth author is quite right: If his book is a "hit" he doesn't get the benefit commensurate with his work. The English plan, as it is sometimes called, seems fairer: the author gets nothing until after a certain number of books are sold—say three or four thousand—then he goes snags with the publishers, on the profits. Given an honest publisher—who doesn't charge his spring hat to "expenses"—this plan seems just.

If an author has money he may pay the publishers to issue his book as he would the tailors to make his coat; but firms having a reputation to maintain will not print a worthless book on any consideration. An author is at liberty to make any arrangement he can with publishers; but he has no license to kick and growl about it afterward; if he is fond of dividing the profits let him go into the business and on occasion share the losses. If you want the lion's share, be the lion.

## II. THE AUTHOR'S TRADE.

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### *AN EDITOR'S GOOD WILL.*

FIRST: Send the editor *good copy*, and at the top of the first page—in the right-hand corner—put your name and address. Then under the title of your story or article draw three lines. At the end of the story put your signature; an assumed name if you choose, but it is better to write under your own name. You will be more circumspect, perhaps, and if not, you will be more sorry for it. *Don't* write a letter with this manuscript, telling the editor your family history, what your relations have done or expect to do, or how many periodicals you have written for. In fact, *don't* tell him anything about yourself. He doesn't care, and he will like you less and think worse of your manuscript at the very start for every word you tell him. All he cares about is the "goods" you have to offer. There is no harm in a brief note saying: "The enclosed manuscript is offered at your usual rates. Please return if unavailable, for which stamps are enclosed."

This is *all* you need say. The last phrase is to assure him, when he has used or lost your stamps—as he sometimes does—that they were sent just the same, and it is his duty to return the manuscript if he cannot use it. The first phrase, "At your usual rates," is to provide against any periodical untried by you, which may not

pay for manuscript unless obliged to. There *are* some of these, and you may send your manuscript to them without knowing it.

*Don't* say "I thought I would send you an article, etc." No matter what you thought; it is enough that you send the article; and its chance of acceptance won't be improved by imbecile remarks of any sort.

Never say: "If this is accepted I expect to be paid for it," or "I shall want some remuneration." Of course you do; that is taken for granted, and if you use any such phrase as this the editor immediately sets you down as a novice. If the periodical is a class-paper or a professional medium, you may often find the reputation you would acquire in its columns fully equivalent to a cash payment somewhere else. It is well to consider this, and is not unbusinesslike to offer manuscript to *some* periodicals *gratis*, but be very careful *where* you do this. *Never* make such a proposition to a periodical that is long established, has plenty of money, and is known to pay for all its contributions.

Discriminate in this matter: Do not offer valuable *news* *gratis* to a newspaper, because it expects to pay for such news: but you may offer it a poem, because newspapers rarely pay for poetry, and it may pay you to have your poem printed there. But never offer any thing anywhere unless you feel that you are getting an equivalent of some sort; and always say plainly if you do not expect payment. It is simply said: "I want this printed in your columns; at your usual rates, or *gratis* if you do not pay for contributions of this kind." You

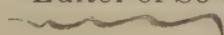
can then safely leave it with any respectable editor, who will do the best he can by you.

Don't set your own price unless you have a marketable reputation.

*Don't call on an editor* in business hours, except by appointment or with an introduction. There is hardly a thing you can do that will prejudice him more deeply against you. He may treat you as courteously as he knows how; but you cannot estimate how thoroughly he detests the sight of you, and thenceforth inconsiderately flouts your manuscript and calls down imprecations upon the very sound of your name. If he wants to see you, he will let you know it; otherwise don't go near him.

Don't write to ask an editor "Do you want an article about so-and-so?" Don't tell him that you are going to China, or you expect to be invited to take tea with the Governor of Indiana, and you think you might make an interesting article; that you are going to make a visit to the great salt mines or gas wells or the petroleum fountains, and "Doesn't he want it written up for his paper?" The question is not where you are going or what you are going to do: it is whether you can write it so it will be worth reading. An editor doesn't want to buy "a pig in a poke" any more than anybody else does. Write up the story of the gas wells or the balloon ascension and send it to him; *then he knows* whether he wants it or not.

Unless you are personally acquainted with the editor, it is better not to address him by name, but simply "Editor of So-and-so." At least, you appear more inde-



pendent and self-respectful in doing this; otherwise you seem to be attempting to come at him by a flank movement. This may be successful in bringing your manuscript directly to his notice without going through the hands of other readers; but the chances are, he will think less of you on account of it. Beside this, your manuscript, if addressed simply to "the editor," goes through the regular routine and is liable to receive more speedy attention than if sent to him personally; editors are not always good business-men.

Finally, you can do something toward gaining an editor's good-will by doing some of his work for him; or rather, to put it more accurately according to his idea, by doing some of your own work that customarily falls on him.

Learn to make yourself an editor of your own work. After you have "dashed off" some fine essay full of elegant phrases, just take the manuscript in hand; imagine that it has come to you from somebody else, and that you are the heartless editor. Look at it, if you can, without a spark of kind feeling, but rather with a little flame of impatience that this presuming young author should send you so voluminous a production. It must be "boiled down," and made just as brief and pointed as possible. Take a blue-pencil (perhaps you will feel better with a blue one, though a black one *might* answer) and score through every word, every phrase, or suggestion or hint that is aside from the main subject. Never mind how fine you thought it sounded when you wrote it: you don't want it; you haven't room for it in "*your*" paper. You are editing it now. You have to

crowd it into a certain space. If the article measures a thousand words, imagine your space admits only five hundred. Cut down ruthlessly. You can form this habit and do the work with a certain degree of success if you try to put yourself by imagination in the editor's chair.

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### GOOD COPY.

SOME things that are better than they look are said to be like a singed cat; but when it comes to offering copy to an editor, he doesn't care for any singed cats. You can easily find out yourself how he feels if you will pick up a bushel of old letters of all your correspondents and try to read them straight through at a sitting; then take another bushel the next day, and another the next, and so on. The first thing you will think is, "Oh, if I didn't have to pull them out of the envelopes and unfold them!" But suppose the envelopes were all shapes and sizes; suppose on some there were no envelopes, but the paper was rolled tight,—curled up like a Waterbury watch spring,—and every time you pulled it open, unless you hung on like grim death, it went together with a snap like a patent bear-trap;—would you have patience if your best friend sent you such a piece of reading? You can't expect an editor to feel kindly toward you if you send him that sort of thing; nor the compositor who has to set up the work.

**DON'T ROLL YOUR MANUSCRIPT.** There isn't any type in the office big enough to say this in, so I put it simply in Roman "caps."

**Don't use pale ink.**

**Don't tie your copy** together with ribbon or fasten it together in any way.

**Don't make little dots or dashes** or marks of any sort to fill out space you don't know what to do with; leave it blank.

**Don't use colored paper** or ink to make your manuscript look like a series of firecracker labels; only plain black and white, or "neutral-tint" paper with violet ink.

**Don't write the lines close together.** Leave room for another line to be written in anywhere. Leave a margin at the left side, top, and bottom of the page; and I would suggest, for your own benefit, that you also leave something of a margin at the right side; for your manuscript, in reading, may be rumpled or frayed at the edges and you will be glad to have room to shave them off with a scissors on sending the article out a second time. On the same account, it is well to write the number of the page considerably below the upper edge.

**Typewriter.**—Best of all, use a typewriter just as soon as ever you can afford to buy or hire one. Not only will it save you an enormous amount of time and strength, but it will be a strong recommendation of your manuscript to any editor who looks at it.

But while you are obliged to depend literally upon your *pen*, the writing ought to be plain and decided; it is presumed you can write a plain, readable hand,—if not, learn to. *Don't* have a network of long, wavy lines and interlacing curlyques. *Don't* have the necessary lines so fine that they need to be traced with a magnifier. *Don't* try to write a "pretty" hand; though if you naturally write a pretty hand, you needn't spoil it to oblige any one.

**Don't send the copy yard wide**, all-wool, warranted not to shrink. Let it be on *small, flat* sheets of the size known as Commercial Note. It might be a little larger or smaller, but that is the most convenient size; and if you want to gain favor with an editor, you will make things as easy for him as possible; he has a hard time at best. *Be sure to number the pages.*

If your story is short, these sheets may be folded as you would a letter and inclosed in an ordinary envelope; but if it is a long manuscript, it would be better laid flat between two pieces of pasteboard a trifle larger than the paper, so to protect the edges; or inclosed flat without pasteboard, in one of the stiff manilla envelopes that are made just large enough to accommodate note sheets *without folding*. In any case, wrap the manuscript in good, substantial fashion; in some way so that the wrapper does not stick to the copy nor break out at the edges and corners. Address it to "The Editor of, etc.,," and be sure to inclose the necessary return postage, and, if possible, a return wrapper addressed plainly to yourself.

**Punctuation** is a business in which "a little learning is a dangerous thing." It is better for you not to bother your head much with it. There are only one or two simple points that it is needful to bear in mind.

**A paragraph** is the beginning of a new thought; it is a change of thought; it is a break in the sequence of ideas; it is a new departure—a sort of "change cars!" When you come to a change in thought, begin a new line, at least an inch and a half from the margin. When

your article is printed notice if the paragraphing has been changed. Beside this notice the paragraphing in the great magazines, and in books of the best publishers.

Lean rather to frequent paragraphs; they are more attractive to the reader's eye. Long paragraphs indicate a solid monotony of thought and scare people off. Yet do not make an illogical break in the idea for the sake of appearances. In a conversation, paragraph the words of each speaker. You will learn by experience. On reading over your manuscript if you want to indicate a paragraph where you have failed to do so, put in this mark: ¶.

**Caret.**—If you want to put in another word or sentence make a caret like this: ^ where you want the addition to come in.

**A Period.**—Of course you know a period should be made at the end of a sentence. Make this point very plain and black. It is a good plan to put a ring around it, or in place of it a little x answers the same purpose and makes the matter plain to the printer, who is sometimes doubtful whether you intended a stop or not.

**Interrogation.**—Always put an interrogation point ? after a question.

**Quotation.**—In quoting the words of another always put quotation marks like this " large and plain at the beginning; and like this " at the close. Never leave the beginning or the close of a quotation in uncertainty or confusion. In a conversation, quote separately the words of each speaker.

**Other punctuations** are not of much consequence. The

editor and printer will look after them; but if you will insist on putting them in yourself—I mean, yourself putting them in—let them be just as few as possible.

**Proper names** and any foreign or unusual word write plainly and spell correctly.

For more instruction, consult a sample of proof reading in the back of a big dictionary. Or a copy of Robert Luce's little book *Writing for the Press*, which is useful to any writer, and fairly indispensable to a writer for newspapers.

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### DESK-TOOLS.

SUIT yourself as nearly as you can about a desk; I like one that comes up high. I push my chair close under it so that the edge of the desk comes across my chest, and the chair-back against mine. Then I contrive an inclined plane by resting a smooth flat portfolio on a closed book before me. This saves bending over to see or to write. I find it the laziest and most comfortable way, and can write all day without getting a crick in the neck, or shoulder-ache, or head-ache, or arm-ache; neither wrist, hand, nor eyes get tired. It is an easy position, too, in which to fall asleep if necessary.

**Stationery.**—A convenient plan is to have your stationery in blocks. You can make them yourself by pressing note-paper together under a weight and brushing the edges with good mucilage; let them stay over night and a block is made. Better still, buy pads already made. They are cheaper than time and trouble.

Don't use ruled paper if you can write straight without it. If you prefer ruled paper, which is very natural

and proper, deny yourself until you come to the point when editors are glad to print anything you send them, no matter in what shape, but until then remember the appearance of your stationery counts for something. In fact, everything counts. Aim at a happy medium in this. Don't use elegant stationery, but something plain and business-like. Good tough linen paper has the advantage that it will wear well and stand a good many handlings, and you may be glad of this before you sell the article. It may save you a deal of re-copying.

**Pen.**—Do you use a stub-pen? It is a great luxury to those who like it.

**Envelopes.**—It is a good thing to have a stock of No. 6 return envelopes, stamped and with your address on them. Then a number of 6½ into which the others can be slipped neatly with your manuscript. Get if you can some good stiff note-size envelopes made of hard manilla paper. These form a first-rate wrapper to send copy in and keep it smooth and ship-shape.

**A well-arranged collection** of newspaper cuttings, and references to magazine and book extracts, is of great value. You can find plenty of good advice on the arrangement of cuttings, and I will give you mine; it may not exactly suit your demands, and it is well to work on a plan most convenient to yourself, but consider this:

Provide yourself with a heavy blue pencil that will make a mark every time without any uncertainty; whenever you come across in your reading, an article or extract you desire, mark it at the top and bottom with your blue pencil. If you want to accomplish a good deal of work, don't wait to read the article

through; judge from the heading if it contains anything for your purpose; don't stop to cut it out now; go on with your reading and mark whatever you come across that you want; don't feel obliged to go all through the paper sifting out everything minutely; take what comes and don't fret about what you miss; there is no end of material; the question is one of selection, not of collection. Now have a great big closet or room where you can throw all these marked papers; then when you have nothing better to do, scissor out some of the marked material and put the cuttings in a big box, or better, let some one else do it for you. When you feel like it go to this box, take out a handful of the cuttings, or as many as you choose, and sort them into some half-dozen classes. If you have taken all knowledge to be your province, you might class them something after this fashion:

Class A, about Men, Women, and Children.

“ B, “ Animals.

“ C, “ Affairs, Industries, and Business.

“ D, “ The Earth, and the plants that grow thereon, Geology,  
the Sun, Moon and stars.

“ E, “ Curious scientific phenomena.

“ F, “ Literary and mathematical curiosities, such as strange  
anagrams, acrostics, and arithmetical combinations,  
witticisms, conundrums, etc.

These half-dozen or more classes may be put into as many boxes, each labeled plainly, and these general classes you may subdivide again. For instance; men, women and children will be, of course, the largest class and might be subdivided into history, biography, anecdotes; and these again classified under artists, literary

men, actors, generals, statesmen, etc. Take advice and *don't paste* them anywhere; lay them loosely in a box. The envelope plan is a good one, for those who have time to open envelopes and fold and unfold the different cuttings and papers; but when one must work rapidly a good plan is to *pin* each set of cuttings—where there are not too many of them—to a half sheet of note-paper, marking the class at the top of the paper in big letters with the blue pencil. By this means each set is always held together, and though thrown about anywhere, yet may be recognized immediately among a heap of others and at need all of them are released in an instant by pulling out the pin, and fastened again with equal readiness. These separate stages of the work; marking, scissoring, classifying, and then subdividing, form a *practical* system; you can do what you feel like doing at any time; drop the work anywhere, and find it again just where you left it. And it is quite possible for *some one else to do much of this work for you.*

**Shorthand writing** is undoubtedly a useful acquirement for a literary man; but few writers have time to master it; and most of the systems are constructed with the view to a kind of writing that an author seldom has to do. There are systems suitable to an author's purpose if he has time to practice them. But preparatory to this, if his time is limited, there is a fashion of abbreviated long-hand, which is a convenience to begin with in making memoranda to be rewritten. All the vowels may be left out, and many of the "A's" and "The's," and most of the prepositions; thus:

Brths thr th mn wth sl so ded ?

Tht nvr 2 hmslf hth sd

“ Ths s m own m ntv lnd !”

**Library.**—Of course you must have a library of your own, if no more than a dictionary and the Bible. But the titles of some good books, which you ought to get as soon as you can, will be found under the head of The Author's Library in the third part of this book.

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### “STYLE” VS. METHOD.

Buffun said: “Style is the *man*.” This saying has been generally interpreted to the effect that “style” is the expression of the individual. In this definition the essayists seem to give a nominal acquiescence; yet in treating the subject at length they persist in applying the term “style” to that conformity to the recognized rules of composition and rhetoric which is not an individual matter in the least, but common to some extent among all good writers, and possible to ordinary ones.

“Style,” according to Buffun's definition, is part of a man's nature, born with him; he may develop it, but he can no more choose it than he can his grandfather. It must be admitted that correct composition is the essential underpinning of every good style, but not by any means its root; not its life nor its distinction; and ought to be considered separately.

The rhetoricians protest in vain at Hamlet “taking up arms against a sea of troubles.” The force of the suggestion lies, not in its correctness, but in the un-studied hyperbole that is the voice of Shakespeare.

Only Dickens can give us that exquisite delight we feel in the assurance that,—

“ Old Marley was dead as a door-nail. Mind, I don’t mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail,” etc.

It isn’t perfect syntax that delights us here, but, between the lines, the smile of the Wizard.

It is not on account of its irreproachable grammar—nor etiquette—that we enjoy Walt Whitman’s assertion—

“ I wear my hat as I please, indoors or out!”  
but principally because it is “ just like” our good gray poet.

The signature of Josh Billings amply justifies the impossible paradox of the remark that “ It would be ten dollars in a certain man’s pocket if he had never been born.”

All the rules in all the books will not impart individuality nor alter it; they may teach a man to *express* it, and thus help him to his *own* “ style,” but to no other. Dickens, with all his painstaking, could express only Dickens. It would be a pity to charge against him all the wretched writing of other people who have tried to express Dickens. How diametrically opposite, yet equally fascinating in its way, is the style of Cardinal Newman! how exactly, too, it expresses the man! The purity and gentle, almost childlike, innocence; the simple, deep religious fervor; the calm unhesitating faith,—remind one of limpid amber. Doctrine aside, the veriest infidel, if he appreciates literary style, might well sit up nights in dissenting admiration of this masterly English.

A man of commonplace mind and ordinary nature cannot acquire a pleasing style, but he may acquire a correct method; that is, he may learn the common sense of rhetoric and of grammar—so far as it inheres in English grammar—and the way in which the human mind receives its ideas most easily and comfortably. I have known writers who have no striking individuality, and are actually lacking any gift of language, who—by simply putting well-chosen facts together and arranging them to come right end foremost, according to given methods—managed to construct a readable and attractive production.

Without wasting too many words on terms, let us consider what one needs to *be* and to *do* to become a good writer. No matter whether you agree with me to call the *being* “style” and the *doing* “method,” or lump them together; the important point is that you realize the necessity of both.

Col. T. W. Higginson, in his “Hints on Writing and Speechmaking,” among his rules for good writing gives simplicity and freshness; then care in the construction of sentences; and, finally, choice of words.

**Simplicity** certainly is one of the prime elements in a good style, as in a good man. The point is, to be honest and unaffected, not to pretend to know more than you do, nor less; not to be wordy and long-winded for the pleasure of hearing yourself talk.

**Freshness** is that spontaneity of expression that comes from using your own eyes and ears; thinking your own thoughts; speaking your own words. It also comes from living near to nature and keeping your head cool

and conscience clear. A part of it lies in the brimming vitality of fine physical condition.

Courage is another thing that goes to the making of a good style, is essential to it: courage to say what you think, to think what you must, whether it is agreeable or not; courage to use short words or long ones, old terms or new and strange ones, but always, as far as you know, the *right* ones; courage to imbibe a new idea and to express it, or to keep it to yourself when advisable; courage to confess ignorance, and ask questions about what "everybody knows." This courage is a personal matter; born with a man; part of his mind—as physical courage is; yet, like that, it can be cultivated.

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### MR. CURTIS'S SUGGESTIONS FOR STYLE.

I inquired of Mr. George William Curtis concerning formation of style; the influence of reading and of public speaking. In reply, he writes as follows:

I should say that there is no royal road to a good style, but, as in all studies, a careful observation of the work of the acknowledged masters will help to cure faults. Dr. Johnson recommended the seeker of a good English style to give his days and nights to Addison. That is good advice, but there are other masters and of different qualities. I should add Milton, Burke, Charles Lamb, Thackeray, Emerson, Hawthorne, and Lowell.

The practice of extemporaneous speaking tends to give a careful man lucidity of diction; and when he has acquired perfect ease, it will add eloquence to diction if he be a man of good taste.

*THE TRADE.*

There are certain details of grammatical construction, correct use of words, and ship-shape arrangement which let us agree to comprise here under the head of the *trade*; because they appear to be mechanical, matters obviously of common sense. From these we can go on naturally to some of those deeper laws less generally recognized, yet worth investigating to the shallow extent possible even to thoughtful minds.

**Accuracy in Facts.**—Before you put pen to paper, you must know what you are talking about. If you have time to go to the root of it, so much better; but at least have a little superficial common sense about it. This would seem a needless suggestion; yet here is a young author whose stories are printed (and paid for) in good magazines, who tells about “tipping” a hotel boy, to the extent of a “handful of guineas,” to take a bouquet up stairs! Figure that out if you know anything about sterling exchange, and you will find it a pretty liberal tip. A principal writer on an influential paper tells about a jockey training down to weight and “driving a trotter on a steeple-chase at a 2.40 pace.” Look at this statement: a jockey reduces weight to *ride* a horse, not to drive him. A horse does not *trot* or pace through a steeple-chase; and if he did, “2.40” is about twenty-five years behind the present trotting-time. When a writer goes “on the turf,” he must learn the commonest facts and terms.

**Don't be absurd.**—If it is an affair of imagination, consider the probabilities; and if you can't bring your plot

out straight by any reasonable and plausible methods, drop the plot and try another story.

A lady whose articles appear in the best magazines, and who has written some excellent stories, describes a young hunter in the depths of a South-American forest, sitting down on a stump, in the midst of a dark and dismal swamp, to *read the newspaper* which he had brought along to beguile the time! The exigencies of the plot require a piece of paper to set afire; hence the clumsy device.

Another writer describes a couple of adventurous boys who suddenly—apropos of nothing—conceive the brilliant idea of buying a bottle of chloroform at the druggist's, to *manufacture ice with!* These boys are not of a scientific turn of mind, and, moreover, are about to start on a fishing excursion; but it turns out fortunately that the chloroform is conveniently at hand to anæsthetize *the pirates by whom they are afterward carried off.* It had to be there; so the author put it there.

Don't, O don't!

**Don't try to be funny** in writing, but don't try not to be funny. Don't be afraid to "speak right out in meetin'." If a droll conceit comes into your head, express it without hesitation and without trying to hide your smile. Miss Kirk, in "Information for Authors," aptly says:

"It is a mistake to suppose that a dull or sober style is necessarily more impressive and effective than a light or even a jovial one. A writer should conscientiously cultivate the habit of looking at the most serious subjects in a cheery and hopeful manner, helpful to himself and inspiring to others."

Read Richard Grant White's book "Words and Their Uses;" notice what he calls "Newspaper English," and avoid it. There may be really quite as much of it in the magazines as in the papers, but it is bad wherever it is. Consider carefully what he says, even though you don't always agree with him. You will see that his object is not to think for you, but to induce you to do your own thinking; to throw off for yourself the bondage of conventional bad English. Let me instance:

"Individuals whose proclivities tend toward the establishment of a residence in the suburban districts perceive the opportunity of partaking of the delights of existence." Don't say *that*; but say:

"Folks that like to make their homes in the country, know how to enjoy life."

**Let your characters do the talking.** Let them show what they *are* by what they say and do, which is a great deal better than for you to try to describe them.

**Say**—"He could not manage *even to be heard*." Don't say, "*to even be heard*." "To be" is a verb that would be better not divided. So with other verbs carrying the adjunct "to." It is better usually not to divide them.—If I have made a mistake here, and "to be" is not a verb after all, you must excuse me, for grammar is my weak point. I used to think I knew something about it when I went to school, but since then I have learned that I didn't and don't.

"To think that *this man of all others* should lie." Here *this man* is at the beginning of the sentence separated from *the others*. He is not *of* the others, so that the rest of the sentence forms a direct contradiction. It would

be right to say, "This man of *all men*," or this one "*among* all others," or "*out of* all others," or "*above* all others," or "*from* all others," but not "*of* all others." It seems so manifest on the face of it that "*this one*" can't be one of "*the others*," yet the sentence occurs in what is called good writing.

"He paid *above* fifty dollars for it." "He paid *over* fifty dollars for it." Here "*over*" and "*above*" are figurative expressions. It is better to say "*more than* fifty dollars." It is almost always better to use literal expressions where they answer the purpose—this habit adds force to figurative terms when they are needed.

Cut out the useless prepositions in such phrases as "*approve of*," "*attain to*." Some of these are found in the Bible, which certain writers cite as sufficient authority, but it is not. Shakspeare said "*most unkindest*," and used other expressions which good writers nowadays have no warrant for.

If any man, woman, or child desires one's personal pronouns to apply accurately, why may not one use the simple word already in the language that presents itself so naturally, and only seems a trifle awkward at first because uncommon?

Many British writers say "*whilst*" and "*amongst*" instead of "*while*" and "*among*." It may be good British, but it isn't choice English. Reputable writers on "*the other side*" also say one thing is different *to* another. How that can be I don't understand, and don't care to. Let it alone, and believe that one thing is different *from* another in spite of the dis-United Kingdom.

It is equally worth while to avoid American provincialisms such as "right away" for "immediately." Many other phrases to be avoided will be found in the books. Plain expressive straightforward English can usually be found even outside of accepted idiomatic colloquialisms.

Avoid phrases full of hissing or jangling sounds when read aloud: "She thought if she went she would go where she knew she would be welcome." Take out some of the "she's. Say: "She thought it better to go where a welcome was waiting her."

Don't tolerate in your own writing such sentences as "Put it somewhere, where you'll know where to find it." Say: "Put it where you will certainly find it."

The following suggestions are condensed from Robert Luce's admirable book, "Writing for the Press:"

"I learned from Macaulay," says Freeman, the historian, "never to be afraid of using the same word or name over and over again, if by that means anything could be added to clearness or force." The repetition of the same meaning in slightly different words is a worse fault than the repetition of the same word. Avoid "*the former*" and "*the latter*" where possible.

Of two words that mean alike, use the shorter.

From the following phrases omit the particle: *Accept of, address to, admit of, bridge over, combine together, continue on, cover over, crave for, deliver up, enter in, examine into, fill up, follow after, forbear from, freshen up, remember of, seek for, taste of, trace out, treat upon.*

In the following, omit the words in brackets: First [of all], the [latter] end, [over] again, throughout the [whole], the [universal] regard of all.

Wrong: "The *above* statement," "Above her strength;" instead say, "The *foregoing* statement," "Beyond her strength."

Shall we say "She looks pretty," or "She looks prettily"? If you mean to describe her appearance, say "pretty," if her manner of look-

ing,—for instance, if she holds her opera glass gracefully,—say “pretty.” Yesterday he felt *good*; that is, well; to-day he feels *bad*, that is ill; but he *always* feels the piano-keys—fingers them—badly.

Never write a personal pronoun without duly considering to what noun it will be found to relate on reading the sentence. The careless use of personal pronouns is a source of great annoyance to editors. It is always better to repeat a name than to use a pronoun when there will be uncertainty as to its antecedent. The use of direct quotation often obviates the difficulty.

How frequently you may hear a speech of this sort: “Mrs. Smith’s daughter has a friend, and she says if she will bring her to see her, she is sure she will enjoy herself.” Now who is who? Matthew Arnold has a sentence of that sort in his criticism of Gen. Grant’s English: “We are all pore critters.”

Let your train of thought be carefully coupled; don’t put the “smoker” in the rear, thus:

“He blew out his brains after bidding his wife good-by *with a gun*.”

“Erected to the memory of John Phillips accidentally shot *as a mark of affection by his brother*.”

Don’t mix metaphors, thus:

“All went merrily until suddenly the *hand of Death stepped in*.”

**The choice of words**, the little pebbles that go to make up the mosaic, seems to be after all the touch that distinguishes the best writers. First you must *have* the words; acquire an extensive vocabulary by the best means at hand. Then when you have an abundance to choose from, don’t be reckless, but, within reasonable bounds, make a fastidious selection; at least be careful and studious, and go slow at first, putting the exact word you want where it belongs. A remarkable ex-

ample of choice of words is the first, third, and fourth stanzas of Drake's "American Flag."

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### METHOD.

In beginning an essay, start with what is nearest to you; take what is *here*, then branch out to what is *there* —if need be. Don't be afraid you won't begin far back enough to have matters understood. Begin with *now*; afterward, as it seems necessary, you can tell about *then* —going back into the dark ages for the genesis of your subject. If you write about umbrellas, begin with the latest invention; tell all about it; don't begin with the first man who carried an umbrella. If your story is about John Smith, never mind about his grandfather who came over in the "Mayflower," but start your story with John himself.

In introducing a new idea to your reader remember that the human mind proceeds from the known to the unknown. The imagination *remembers half* and multiplies by two, or four, or ten, or whatever it may be. The imagination can easily multiply when it knows a fraction of the idea, but *it can never guess at half*. Imagination is not a wild guessing, but simply the application on another scale of *ideas already clearly defined*, just as we compute the distance to the stars from measurements made on earth.

**Example first;** precept afterward—if you must moralize. It is a mistake to suppose that people first learn the rules and principles and afterward carry them out. Quite the contrary is the fact. People first *do*,

and thus find out the rules for doing. It is action that discovers the rules for action; only through experience with *things* and *facts* are principles acquired. Baby only begins to *know* anything after he has *felt* it; he finds his own small useless hands before he indulges in those sagacious reflections we see shining through his eyes on the general subject of little pink fingers. It is perhaps an agonizing pin which first forces the conviction into his mind that this is a world of little pricking vexations, and his earliest notion of its ups and downs comes to him when his father tosses him or his nurse drops him. Baby has not the faintest conception of the changing year until he has toddled knee-deep among the June dandelions, snatched at October's flaming leaves, or clapped his little hands and cupped them upward to catch the first white, feathery crystals floating down out of a November sky. So through life, though he lives to be hoary with wisdom, the process of acquiring it is never reversed. His mind is fed through his senses just as inevitably as his stomach is fed through his mouth.

**Don't undertake too large a field.** Better tell everything about something than something about everything. Don't attempt large subjects like "The destiny of mankind," or "The future of the human race," or "The attainment of happiness." Instead of "How to live" narrow the subject to "How to get strong," or "How to sleep," or "What to eat," and make three essays out of it; or better still, take one of these and narrow it still further to "What to eat for breakfast," and by treating this one point thoroughly and well you do more toward teaching people how to

live than by attempting the whole subject, beside making a more salable article. Narrow the field of operations, and develop that limited surface for all it is worth. (They say that French market-gardeners generally conduct their farming more scientifically and profitably on a quarter-acre lot than many of our American farmers who think they have not room enough in a hundred acres. With the French every inch of soil is developed to its fullest possibility.) Ease, too, comes from treating a little leisurely rather than abbreviating a good deal.

**Don't tell two stories at once.** If you have a single idea that is not big enough for a long story write a short one, but give it all to the elaboration of that one idea. Some of our best writers are able to disregard this rule, but only the most skilful can do so successfully, and it is not an example to be followed by beginners. In "Robert Elsmere" there are two stories—a story of religion and a love-story—that might be really quite independent of each other, but are there made to cross each other at intervals of every two or three chapters; like a grape-vine trellis. The advantage is that any reader who may begin to yawn over a long chapter of religious experiences will be brightened up at the prospect of a pleasant little love episode a page or two farther on. And in order to get the love-story he will be coaxed on—like a horse by a wisp of straw—from chapter to chapter through the book.

Then again, those who despise the love story—or affect to—will read it for the sake of its supposititious relation to the other part. Although this arrangement

meets the popular taste, the remarkable strength and beauty of the author's style and the power of either story in itself are not really an artistic justification for binding them in together.

**The Gradgrind philosophy of writing**, this book aims strenuously to insist upon: Facts, facts, facts; there *is* nothing but facts. The writer's first business is to get at these facts exactly—get the meat out of them—and then, *by the most direct method*, to transmit them to his readers. That is the whole substructure of literature; the groundwork—the anatomy.

There are these several stages: First, observation and perception. Learn to *see* well and *hear* well. Have all your senses sharpened so that you may perceive things *as they are*, not as people tell you they are. If a man tells you the sea is blue or green or black, don't take his say-so for it; *look* at it and "mind your eye," so that if it be chocolate color (the sea, not the eye) or purple or the color of a maltese cat—precisely what I have seen at times—you will know it.

Then these *perceptions* will give you *ideas* (that is if you are capable of ideas). Then come *words*; but the words must never come first. They must depend upon the ideas. Words are only paper currency: every one must bear the stamp of an idea, else it is counterfeit; and must have a golden fact behind, ready to redeem it, else it is worthless.

Standing—for example—on the Brooklyn Bridge at midnight: What you see and hear makes a certain impression on your mind; that you want to convey to another: Perhaps you will say, "It was weird and strange.

There was a feeling of awe and dread, a gloomy unaccountable sensation." Maybe you will say a "crawling" sensation. Every sympathetic soul *who has been there* will understand you, simply through memory; but to one who has not, you cannot convey the feelings with which you were inspired *simply by expressing your feelings*, however eloquently or accurately. You must *describe the things you saw and heard* which were the cause of the feelings. *Make the picture as you saw it*, then the reader will feel as you felt.

Was it the unaccustomed stillness of the great twin cities; the thick obscurity of the sky; the gleam of the red and yellow lights along the eastern shore; the ghostly reflection of the river boats sliding stealthily out from somewhere into nowhere; or the sharp black shadow-cables silhouetted across the pathway by the white blaze of the electric lights; the solemn cathedral-like arches of the towers? What was it that impressed you?—tell the facts. If you want another to understand, it will never answer to sum it all up, and say, "Oh, it was such a grand, awful, weird, strange feeling. It made me feel so kind of lifted up, elevated, don't you know?" because ten to one he doesn't know, and never will know from that diagnosis.

Observe carefully; persist in selecting the word that describes exactly what you want to describe; not something pretty near it. Every time you use a word which is almost what you want but not quite, the outline of the picture at that point becomes blurred and indistinct.

Study Robert Louis Stevenson's miniature landscape showing the principality of Grunewald:

It was a patch of hilly country covered with thick wood. Many streams took their beginning in the glens of Grunewald, turning mills for the inhabitants. There was one town, Mittwalden, and many brown, wooden hamlets, climbing roof above roof, along the steep bottom of dells, and communicating by covered bridges over the larger of the torrents. The hum of water-mills, the splash of running water, the clean odor of pine sawdust, the sound and the smell of the pleasant wind among the innumerable army of the mountain pines, the dropping fire of huntsmen, the dull stroke of the wood-axe, intolerable roads, fresh trout for supper in the clean bare chamber of an inn, and the song of birds and the music of the village-bells—these were the recollections of the Grunewald tourist.

**In the Work of Great Painters and Writers** you have probably observed that sometimes they create “impressions” without giving all the details. Young writers are prone to think it a sign of genius to neglect details and jump immediately at broad generalizations and sweeping effects. Beginners want to be “impressionists” at the start. Very good if they *could* be; it is high art, but they must come up to it step by step. Only the artist that has carefully and minutely studied the leaf and the twig can make that broad stroke with his thumb, which, viewed across the room, passes successfully for a tree. Only one who has observed life closely in its details knows how to select those telling features that so graphically suggest all the rest. Only those who have *seen everything*—and could put everything in if they chose—know just what they may safely leave out. Look at one of the outline drawings of Remington or Frenzeny, and you marvel at what may be brought out by the “touch here and there”; one line being made to do the work of twenty. Yet the artist had to know all about the other

nineteen lines—what they were and where they belonged—in order to make this *one* answer the purpose. The apparently “hap-hazard touch” is like the touch of the conjurer’s palm—delicate beyond computation, yet determinate and unwavering as the grip of King Richard’s mailed gauntlet. You must *realize*, before you can idealize; you must know the facts and know them intimately before you can gather them together to paint a moral or adorn a tale.

**Literalness.**—Facts may be either real or imaginary, but in either case they should be within reason and possibility, and should bear the stamp of genuineness. Ariel’s song is what we would expect from such a dainty sprite; the speech of Caliban seems to us as obviously to belong to him as if he were a next-door neighbor.

The sayings and doings of the queer folks met by “Alice in Wonderland” are reported with such circumstantial detail that we feel sure the account may be depended on. “The Owl and the Pussy Cat” come to be genuine figures in our acquaintance because of the matter-of-fact sincerity with which they are treated. It wouldn’t be half so satisfactory to be told that they took away with them “considerable treasure” and went on an “extended voyage” to a “fairy island,” but we take it quite to heart in an agreeable way that their cargo consisted expressly of “honey and plenty of money wrapped up in a five-pound note.” The five-pound note has a crisp rattle about it that helps the story wonderfully. Then they sail exactly “a year and a day to the land where the Bong tree grows.” It doesn’t matter that nobody knows *where* the Bong tree

grows. It isn't of the least consequence that there isn't a Bong tree. The words alone stand for something definite and tangible that the fancy can lay hold of. We know just where they went and how long it took them.

Spencer's "Philosophy of Style" gives some valuable suggestions, and gets at the root of the matter in a very thorough scientific fashion; rather too scientific. You will find it as gristly a piece of English as you care to set your teeth in if you are fond of easy reading, yet the juice is there if you have perseverance to extract it. Curiously, the corner-stone of this philosophy is *easy reading*—in Spencerian diction: "economy of the recipient's attention." This may be secured by *few* words; by *short* words; by *familiar* words. Language is even at times "a hindrance to thought;" simple ideas are more readily communicated by signs than by words: "A finger on the lips is more forcible than, 'Do not speak!' A beck of the hand is better than, 'Come here!'" And one word is often more expressive than several: the force of "Beware!" "Fudge!" "Nonsense!" would be lost by expansion into "Be very careful" or "It is not sensible."

"Saxon English or rather non-Latin English" words, being *familiar from childhood*, go with less friction to the mind—and quicker. A child says "I have," "I wish," "I think;" not "I possess," "I desire," "I surmise." "He does not ask for *amusement* but for *play*; he calls things *nice* or *nasty*, not *pleasant* or *disagreeable*." The strength of this early association is never entirely lost.

Saxon words gain by their comparative *brevity*; for, when a number of words go to make up the idea, it is given

and taken quicker. Although *when the idea is all in one word* that may sometimes better be a long word; for the hearer at the first syllable takes the idea and then has time to dwell on it: *grand* sounds less forcible than *magnificent*; *vast* is not so powerful as *stupendous*.

Another “frequent cause of strength in Saxon and other primitive words is their imitative character: those directly imitative, as *splash*, *bang*, *whiz*, *roar*, and those analogically imitative, as *rough*, *smooth*, *keen*, *blunt*, *thin*, *hard*. In both cases the greater or less likeness to the things symbolized makes on the senses impressions allied to the ideas to be called up,” and thus saves effort.

In this same saving of effort lies the superiority of specific over generic words; of concrete terms over abstract ones. We save the reader the effort of translating words into thoughts.

“We should avoid such a sentence as”:

In proportion as the manners, customs, and amusements of a nation are cruel and barbarous, the regulations of their penal code will be severe.

“And in place of it we should write”:

In proportion as men delight in battles, bull-fights, and combats of gladiators, will they punish by hanging, burning, and the rack.

“Economy of the recipient’s attention” is further secured by the right sequence of words in a sentence and of sentences in a group:

“As in a narrative, the events should be stated in such sequence that the mind may not have to go backwards and forwards in order to rightly connect them; so in every sentence, the sequence of words should be that which suggests the constituents of the thought in the order most convenient for the building up that thought.”

The subject of Hood’s “Song of the Shirt” is a woman

Now if the poem began with these two words, "A woman," a dozen quick-minded readers would instantly imagine each a different woman--every woman totally unlike the subject about to be described, so that when the description followed, these different minds would have to revise their various conceptions. But in fact the poem begins with the description and puts the subject afterward:

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat, etc.

By this arrangement (commonly called the inverted style) the average mind is precluded from starting off on the wrong errand like a half-informed messenger-boy. This principle of presentation is followed through various amplifications in Spencer's treatise, which also dwells on the value of figurative language, and on the art to select from a given "scene or event those typical elements which carry many others along with them, and so by saying a few things suggest many." Thus in Tennyson's *Mariana* how graphically the following lines suggest the utter dreariness of a deserted house:

"All day within the dreamy house,  
The door upon the hinges creaked,  
The blue fly sung i' the pane; the mouse  
Behind the moldering wainscot shrieked,  
Or from the crevice peered about."

Another striking passage which seems to me to illustrate a similar principle occurs in Bayard Taylor's "Song of the Camp." What a volume of pathetic eloquence is conveyed in the one little fact that

. . . As the song grew louder  
Something upon the soldier's cheek  
Washed off the stains of powder.

Spencer says:

Poetry is especially impressive, partly because it obeys all the laws of effective speech, and partly because in so doing it imitates the natural utterances of excitement. It is the idealized language of emotion in brevity, in the abundant use of figures, in the frequency and violence of the inversions; and in its rhythmical structure, is an idealization of the natural language of strong emotion.

There is danger to be warned of in the use of figures, examples, and familiar comparisons. The necessity of figurative and concrete expression has always been felt by the best writers since writing began, consequently classic literature is filled with phrases—thick as beads on a string—which by very reason of their power have been taken up by every tongue, and have become so much a part of our daily speech as to be hackneyed, stereotyped, and forbidden to writers of to-day. No writer dare say “cold as ice,” “pure as snow,” “sweet as a rose,” “black as night.” It seems at first thought as if all the good comparisons had been exhausted; as if the old-timers having first lived with nature had purloined all her choicest secrets so that there is nothing left. But in truth *everything* is left; it only needs quick senses to discover it.

The only help for a latter-day writer is not in striving to evolve some new or startling figures of speech from his own consciousness; the result would be an affectation quite as disagreeable in its way as the conventional phrases of the hack writer, who is satisfied with stringing together the same old figures that thousands of

better writers have used before him. Observation is the way out of the difficulty. There are just as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it; there are just as many strange and curious things in nature and life, just as many undiscovered beauties in "the groves, the skies, the fountains" to-day as ever there were, and there are numberless beauties already discovered and familiar to common people, that have seldom been used in literature. But you cannot shut yourself in your study and find these things; you must go abroad and live in the fields and under the skies; associate with the trees, with the flowers and with every living thing. You will not look far before you will discover material as rich as any that Shakespeare found in his walks on the banks of the Avon.

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### THE ART OF WRITING.

**Nature's Intention.**—Joshua Reynolds, who has been called the philosopher of painting, says it is the business of the artist to carry out nature's intention. Nature may be right, or according to the pessimists it may be a huge mistake; but however that may be, here it is and we are part of it; and we can get along smoothly and comfortably in proportion as we adapt ourselves *to* nature and not try to go against it

One can hardly undertake to declare off-hand *all* of nature's intention, but some things any thoughtful man cannot fail to observe.

**Nature's Language.**—To begin with, nature outside of man does not speak in words. She appeals to us in

colors and melodies and fragrance; in sunsets and green hillsides; in bird-warblings, south winds and northern tempests; in clover-fields and wild-honey; in scorching noons and frosty mornings, but not in words.

So it seems that literature, of all the arts, is at a disadvantage; the musician and the painter can come to the heart by nature's method directly through the ear and the eye. But what can be done with words? They cannot *make* the picture, the melody, or the fragrance; but they can *recall* it. It is through *memory* that literature has its opportunity. Here it has even an advantage over some other arts; for when to-day is gloomy and silent, a word-reminder may bring back the red-gold sunset of yesterday; and "the night shall be filled with music."

Words can remind us of "Handel's Messiah," or "Mozart's Requiem," or the "Dead March in Saul," thus playing a solemn dirge or a triumphant paen. Words do not leave a sweet taste in the mouth, nor tickle the palate with a strange sensation; but talk of "honey" or "olives" and the mouth will water. Speak of "velvet" or the "west wind," or "the touch of a vanished hand," and words will press the fingers, stroke the forehead, or play upon the cheek. Words have no fragrance, yet they are capable of a magic that seems delicately to caress ears and nostrils at once:

" That strain again;—it had a dying fall:  
 O, it came over me like the sweet sound  
 That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
 Stealing and giving odor."

But next to useless are the words of mere abstraction. "Sweetness," "light," "beauty," "music," "fragrance;" these are feeble terms. The words of power are the *reminding words*, the *sense words*.

There is an anecdote going the rounds of the press somewhat as follows:

*First Darkey* (speaking over the fence):—What's dat yo' drinkin'?

*Second Darkey*:—'Pollinaris water.

*First Darkey*:—'Pollinaris water? What dat taste like?

*Second Darkey*:—Taste like yo' foot's asleep.

Now this darkey may not have acquired a very elegant literary style; but his *method* was perfect. In this instance, at least, he conveyed the idea as, probably, it could not have been done in any other way. He appealed to the *senses* through the *memory*; an appeal that reaches the human mind by the shortest cut.

In Stevenson's best work it will be noticed that the most poignant and suggestive phrases are vitalized by these sense-words and picture-words. Here is an extract—all too brief—from the famous chapter in Prince Otto, describing the flight of the Princess. To take away a word here or there would be robbing a casket of its jewels; yet careful study and analysis of the phrases will reveal that their exquisite poetry appeals at every step to the *senses*, and is founded upon what, in the author's mind, is exalted matter of *fact*.

The glory of the great night laid hold upon her; her eyes shone with stars; she dipped her sight into the coolness and brightness of the sky, as she might have dipped her wrist into a spring; and her heart, at that ethereal shock, began to move more soberly. The sun that sails overhead, plowing into gold the fields of daylight azure and uttering the signal to man's myriads, has no word apart for man the individual;

and the moon, like a violin, only praises and laments our private destiny. The stars alone, cheerful whisperers, confer quietly with each of us like friends; they give ear to our sorrows smilingly, like wise old men, rich in tolerance; and by their double scale, so small to the eye, so vast to the imagination, they keep before the mind the double character of man's nature and fate.

In much of Stevenson's picturesque writing where word after word falls on the reader's mind instantly biting in like a drop of acid on a soft stone—this etching quality will be found composed of the same elements that constitute the darkey's description of the Apollinaris water. The same general truth applies to the most striking passages in Shakespeare; and in the Bible, whose literary preëminence dwells not only in the message, but also largely in the artless realism of Oriental imagery. And—by the way—no writer is well equipped lacking familiarity with the Bible.

**Beauty.**—Those objects in nature that most fascinate us by an aspect which we call beauty or grace are usually found on investigation to be remarkable for their perfect fitness to surroundings and to the special purpose of existence. This is illustrated by the bee-enticing “morning-glory” and in the curious marking and “fearful symmetry” of the tiger.

Language to be graceful and strong must be fitting; adequate simply to its object. The language of the masters owes its beauty and power to a keen perception of the true purpose in hand, and the choice of accurately expressive terms. Such perception and choice are rare gifts; yet cultivation and study will help develop them. It was of Shakespeare, his most intimate companion said: “The true poet's made as well as born.”

That grace and strength are compatible is seen repeatedly both in nature and art. Language seldom gains in force by the sacrifice of what is agreeable.

Milton's jangling lines:

. . . Storming fury rose  
And clamor such as heard in Heaven till now  
Was, never,

is not any more significant of war and conflict because the relative clause is at sword's-points with its antecedents; and the particles have each other by the throat. Even great genius and profound scholarship shares the human liability to error in seeking effect through the super-refinements of art, and falls occasionally upon ineffective artifice.

**Nature is Familiar.**—It brings us few novelties and we do not care for them. A well-balanced man loves a graceful elm tree; he loves the other trees that grow about his home; those that he sees every day,—the same at morning and evening. Each succeeding season bringing only that round of changes that he has seen year in and year out, perhaps from childhood;—he is pleased with all this. He loves and enjoys the common-places of nature's work better than the strange and unusual; he takes more delight in her every-day wonders than in her eccentricities. The familiar fields and skies, the creatures about him; the things of yesterday and to-day, the eternal ocean and the everlasting hills, are more comforting to him than whirlwinds and earthquakes. Looked at superficially, there seems to be a certain instinct in mankind to run after curiosities, freaks, and novelties, yet these soon pall upon a normal

taste; the appetite for change is soon satisfied, while the endless repetition of the familiar things in nature never satiates. In a word, a man takes more enjoyment when nature fulfills her intention than when she fails. This is because he is himself a part of the intention, and is in tune with it, when at his best.

So in literature those things that are familiar, the every-day wants, hopes, and fears of humanity, furnish the theme for all that is best, for all that is truly popular and enduring.

**Uniformity.**—Nature not only does the same things repeatedly, but in the same *way*. Working along accustomed lines, nature employs the same processes and produces the same forms and proportions. Apply your foot-rule to any tree or plant in the garden or on the hillside; to the anatomy of man or any living creature, and you will find a mathematical proportion that will surprise you if you didn't know of it. Measure a leaf or a star; a snow-flake, a rain-drop; any of nature's work above ground, or the crystals that form deep in the earth, or things in the waters under the earth. Measure the harmonic sound waves or the light vibrations in the colors of the rainbow. Everywhere is mathematical uniformity; everywhere, as Plato says, "God geometrizes."

The writer need not try so very hard to evolve something altogether original. Not only is this impossible, but it is needless. There is no need of new forms, new fashions, new ways of doing things; new situations or complications. In literature invention is not needed so much as discovery. The patience to work along old

lines, to become closely acquainted with things as they always have been and always will be ; and to show them truthfully again regardless of the fact that they have been truthfully shown a thousand times before.

**Variety.**—The invariable uniformity of nature never becomes monotonous, for subsisting with it is that “infinite variety” which discloses to the investigator a new world at every step : few novelties, but continual surprises; one tongue, yet “a various language.” This embodiment of variety in uniformity constitutes an ensemble: Unity.

**Unity.**—Notice a tree standing alone upon a hillside, a graceful, perfect tree—such as nature sometimes shows us ; and at a little distance—standing where the entire outline enters the eye—you are struck first by the grace and symmetry of the whole tree ; you do not think of details, of the limbs, the branches, the twigs, the leaves ; only of the tree—nor can you imagine it something that has been gradually built or constructed ; put together piece by piece. This outline, so attractive to the eye, seems rather the sudden springing into life of *an idea* ; it strikes you as *a beautiful thought*, spontaneously made manifest; a conception of grace in the Creator’s mind, suddenly embodied in a visible form.

Coming near, we find each limb bound a different way ; no two are alike, or turn in precisely the same direction. Every branch is found going about its own business. Each particular twig and leaf will have a twist of its own. You will hardly find two of these exactly matching anywhere on the tree ; pull down a leaf and notice the little veins that branch out from the central stem.

(Their configuration is similar to that of the parent tree. The leaf has been called an epitome and a type of the tree, as the human individual is of the race.) Hardly two of these veins are exactly alike ; each takes part in the differentiating process ; and yet all point to a common destination. Just as the little ramifications of the leaf run into the central stem, so the leaves agree to cycle about the twig ; that again points into the branch, which turns to the bough, and this to the limb ; all finally running to the tree, which at last fastens upon the earth, and spreading its roots wide and deep takes hold upon another entity. Each part, in developing and fulfilling its own life, is at the same time contributing to the perfect proportion and symmetry of the whole.

Nothing in nature exists to itself or for itself alone ; nothing stands apart separate and independent of the universal scheme: "All are but parts of one tremendous whole." In the poem, argument, novel, or drama, that aspires to be a noble work of art—an ideal, the various parts ought all to go to the building up of—and ought to hang dependently upon—the main plot or purpose, and this, in turn, should be rooted deep upon those underlying principles and truths, so far as we know them, upon which the moral existence of mankind is founded.

**Shakespeare's Method** is the method of nature ; deep and subtle as nature's self—perhaps past finding out entirely. Yet some things appear even to the casual observation of a work like Hamlet : There is one grand, dominant thought ; a great current into which all other thoughts are swept and lost. We shut the book and re-

member only Hamlet the Prince—the man of great heart and unstable will—Hamlet the melancholy, the afflicted—overshadowed between the horns of the double tragedy, that eclipses both the rising and the setting sun. *This*—almost to the exclusion of every other thought—is what impresses and oppresses us after a first reading of the play. But there is much beside in it; *everything* is there; nearly every phase of human life and feeling is touched and lighted up. A new reader, opening at the graveyard scene, might imagine he had come upon a comedy, and that the First Grave-Digger—Shakespearian Sam Weller, with his mimicry, his droll evasiveness, and facetious philosophy—was himself the hero; yet every one of his ghastly witticisms is thrown unconsciously, like a javelin into the solemn mood of the Prince and sheathed in his tragic deliberations.

**Antagonism.**—It seems that it must appear almost plain to any thoughtful mind that *nature has an intention*. A direction and a purpose seems evident in all. If it be chance that things are as they are, it is a very ingenious chance. If nature be simply mad there is “method” in her madness. But while it is assumed as evident that nature has a steady purpose and intention, it is also undeniable that both in the unconscious world and in mankind, nature continually fails and falls short. Some people contend that her failures are even more than her successes. Not admitted; yet they are too frequent to be thrown out of the account. Nature we will say intended to do thus and so, but here she failed. This is one of the exceptions—one of the times that “don’t count.” Or perhaps after all it might be a more com-

prehensive view of the scheme (as we are trying to comprehend what is beyond comprehension) to say that the failures and exceptions are also *part of the intention*. Everywhere is one power of growth, another of decay; all living things reproducing their kind, and the vast convulsions, disasters, catastrophes of nature and accident sweeping them away in multitudes and masses; continual progress and continued backsliding. A triumph of civilization one day that fills the morning newspapers with windy elation, and next day some vile episode of modern barbarism that evokes an equally sonorous wail over the scandalized proprieties, and a "scare-head" that sells an extra edition. The making and marring is continually going on; the building and wrecking; the doing and undoing. And right at the point where it is in progress; right in the midst of the antagonism, the struggle, the conflict; right where the fight is, there for average humanity is the fun. For the few who desire peace, quiet, and harmony, there are so many who crave the excitement of conflict and antagonism, that it would be wisdom on the part of the literary artist to take this strong natural tendency into consideration of his problem.

There are two things that engage for the time the enthralled attention of an American multitude. One is the political fight every four years, in which half the nation does its best by every unrighteous method to "down" the other half. The other is a champion prize-fight, in which two big, well-made brutes, try to batter each other to pieces. This attractive diversion enlists perhaps not quite so large a number, but certainly

a great variety of minds, and enormous sums of money.

An actor was telling me the other day of his company's attempt to present the classic drama in a Southern town; at one of the thrilling crises of the performance, startling but familiar sounds were heard outside the building, and the entire audience instantly adjourned in a body to witness a dog-fight.

What were the mimic agonies of Sophocles to a real dog-fight? Men, as a rule, love fights, and fighting of all kinds. Those men who would not attend a fight for worlds will absorb newspaper column after column of brutal details with avidity. But we take no delight in the big man thrashing the little one out of his boots; it is only where they are more nearly a match—where there is more equal resistance, that we enjoy the spectacle. There is no attraction in the good cause that has a clear pathway. We like the cause to succeed, but we want to see a struggle for it. This seems to hold in the most trivial affairs, and independent of motive. Look across the street at that well-dressed, amiable-looking gentleman trotting comfortably along toward home. There is nothing of particular interest about him for you, until you descry just ahead an ash-box that a small boy has left in the way; then keen anticipation wakens in your breast. If the man avoids the ash-box you are disappointed and unhappy; if he falls into it or over it your pleasure is unbounded. Neither the man nor the ash-box gratifies you, but the conjunction of the two. If the box had been kicked lightly aside, or, on the other hand, if it had been an iron safe, and the

man had bruised himself, you would have taken no satisfaction. This comes only when there is an appreciable resistance, a something that requires effort to overcome, yet that *is* overcome.

Antagonism, in some form, is the essential principle in life, and in literature, that thrills and excites the witness, the auditor, or reader, and holds him for the time breathless, at the mercy of the spectacle. Perhaps this fundamental fact is the most comprehensive answer to the question, "Must there always be a villain?" Yes, in this sense there must be; there must be a power of evil, definite, concrete, set up in plain opposition to the power of good, if you inaugurate the first. Given a hero, there must be a villain—or a villainous opposition of some sort.

It is said "The course of true love never did run smooth." May it not be that the course of smooth love never did run quite true? Is it not this opposition that brings out an even more vital reaction? Is it not the menace of evil that causes the good spirit to gird on the armor more tightly, and whet the edge of the sword? We need not go into the ethics of the question; but as a literary problem it may be asked, can we afford to dispense with the evil? Have the readers any use for Saint George without any Dragon?

Can you recall a story, or a play, in which love or philanthropy, or any other kindly virtue, flowed on uninterruptedly in a placid even stream—can you recall any such story or play that you were willing to sit through; that would compel you to take "the next

number," or come back after the first act? If you have no rooted objection, I will trow, *not*.

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### PLAY-WRITING.

It has been said that only one who has some practical familiarity with the stage can hope to write a good play; yet if any one can produce worse plays or rather more wretched attempts at plays than have been botched up by some veteran actors I know, I should like to see —no, I should *not* like to see them. With theatrical people themselves it is almost chief among the hackneyed verities that the most experienced manager can never tell how a play will go till it has gone—for good or bad. If an experienced actor cannot surely write a good or successful play, and an experienced manager cannot surely recognize it, what earthly advantage, according to their own admission, have theatrical people over the literary man? Is it all a hopeless enigma, a conundrum? can nobody know anything about it? Are there no laws or principles or rules by which a man can write a play which will surely have, at least, moderate success? Can anybody tell? Yes, the audience can tell. The audience always does tell—it tells in the theater, and at the box-office; and that is the inexorable judgment by which every play must abide. It may be propped for awhile by adventitious means; but this will not cheat the public in the long-run. Then since the audience furnishes the crucial test, and is the court of last appeal, it seems as simple, —as plain as two and two are four—that a good play can

best be originated neither on the stage nor in the study, but from "the front." If you want to learn to write a play, sit in front of the most successful plays that have been written, and do your *studying* there. Sitting "in front" night after night at some successful play, notice the occasions where the audience is most demonstrative, or most deeply moved; go home, write down what they (the actors) said, and what they *did*. You will come to see that, at least five times out of ten, it was what was *done* that produced the effect.

It is hard to say how a play may or may not be created. Some highly successful plays have been constructed piece by piece out of stage business. One popular writer of farce-comedies is reported as having said to a collaborator, at a point where the plot seemed somewhat to flag, "Now just here our man must jump out the window." And forthwith he was predestined to jump. Some plays grow up by gradual accretion around some unique character; as the "Old Homestead" has grown to a full-fledged play out of an original fifteen-minute variety sketch. Some plays have originated with some strange coincidence in fact or imagination; the *plot* being the natural beginning, with characters and stage "business" coming afterward. Some plays begin with motive—the impulse of a great passion being the mainspring of all.

If the idea of a play includes, to start with, a strong active force that is bound straight away in some direction, and another force almost as strong that is bound to stand up and resist the first, and bring about a struggle—your play ought to develop into *action* some-

where. In the most ridiculous affairs will be found always some two opposing motives, the struggle between which, makes the life and interest and action of the piece.

Having hit on a good plot, you need as a simple literary preparation to learn to write witty repartee, to make every speech tell in the development of the plot; to make the speeches crisp and to the point; to bring the climax at the close of the speech, instead of the middle; to use words that will "carry" well in delivery. And when you have got at all this, it is time to call in your friend, the actor, the one who is familiar with stage business; the one who is so much needed—and he surely *is* needed here—let him look at your play that has *talked* well; perhaps he can show you how to make it *act* well.—Perhaps he can't. But neither of you can well say to the other: "I have no need of thee."

A deal of labor may be saved, and good results attained by adapting old plays, or foreign plays. Read the newspapers and a good biographical dictionary. In the latter a grand plot may be found on every two or three pages; most of the men who get into biographical dictionaries have been remarkable either for character, or association with great events. An article on Play-Writing, by Dion Boucicault, in the *North American Review*, some eight or nine years ago, will be found useful to all interested in the subject.

*MR. GILLETTE'S SUGGESTIONS TO PLAY-WRITERS.*

THE following questions I propounded to Mr. Gillette, author of "Held by the Enemy":

- A.* Is the demand for American plays increasing?
- B.* Is the supply ahead of the demand?
- C.* What description of plays are most wanted?
- D.* Is it difficult for an "unknown" to gain recognition and favor?
- E.* Is there plenty of material for good American historical plays?

The answers subjoined will be of special interest and value, coming from a successful dramatist, author, and manager.

*A.* The demand for good plays is increasing—American or foreign. Provided there is reason to suppose the work will be successful, the question of where it originated does not arise.

*B.* The supply of good material is far behind the demand. It is with doubtful or worthless pieces that the market is glutted. (I use the word "good" in what might be called a *business* sense.)

*C.* If a manager could answer that question he would shortly be a millionaire. A *novelty* in some shape is a general requirement—even if old material is employed, it must be treated in some original manner to please; but whether it will please or not is always a problem, no rule or law of action having been discovered which governs the public taste.

*D.* It is, though perhaps not more so than in other fields of work. If there is more difficulty, it is doubtless owing to the fact that so many undertake dramatic work who have absolutely no qualification therefor. This makes the chances that the "unknown's" work will be valueless exceedingly large, and naturally disinclines managers to risk money upon it. They prefer work from those who have demonstrated some ability, or work that has already succeeded abroad. So far as I know there is little or no "favoritism." It is simply a matter of business. If an author—whether known or unknown—can convince a manager that he has written a piece which is likely to succeed, he will have no difficulty in disposing of it.

E. There seems to be material enough—the question is whether to use it. The public has heretofore shown a preference for modern plays rather than historical, and I am inclined to think will continue to do so. Dramas of the present time are more *real, flesh and blood, actual* to them, and hence they can enter into them with a fuller sympathy and a closer interest. Still, it is not impossible that this may change and historical plays become, for a time, quite popular.

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### THE ART OF THE SHORT STORY.

The secret of writing a good short-story is in *writing* it. It is hard to lay down any rules. The best short-stories are, apparently, constructed on quite contradictory principles. Probably the best way to gain anything from theorizing is to *read the best work of the most noted short-story writers*; studying and comparing carefully. One may by this means discover for one's self some secret that has not yet been unearthed.

Edgar Poe has been called the prince of short-story writers. In three of his best stories, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Purloined Letter," and "The Gold Bug," the consummation of the plot comes early in the story, and is not reserved to cap the climax. The solicitude of the reader hangs mainly upon a retrospect of events, the outcome of which is already disclosed.

Stockton, who is perhaps the most acceptable short-story writer to-day, seems to hide the strength of his story in some whimsical situation, of which the outcome is not felt by the reader to be of any particular importance, further than his having a mild curiosity as to what will come next; as in watching the Punch-and-Judy show. But in Stockton's most celebrated short story,

“The Lady or the Tiger?” the main point of interest is literally, the “out-come;” but it doesn’t come; the very fact that the end of the story is left untold is, perhaps, its most conspicuous point of originality.

Poe’s stories exploit most picturesquely the value of the inductive method, applied both to human motives and to circumstances, which—seeming strangely irrelevant—yet all have an unseen bearing upon the point in question. Stockton, too, deals with human motives; but he handles them with a big interrogation-point: “What will a woman of a given temperament and training do under certain circumstances? Would she give her lover to another woman or to a tiger?” and this theme may be used through several variations as a motive for many stories.

A newspaper anecdote tells of two lovers standing on a wharf; the lady of their affection falls into the water; the valorous lover jumps in and rescues her; but the other one, who stays on shore and keeps dry—looking on at the struggle—proves discretion the better part of valor, for the lady marries *him*. A good imagination might conjure up many a situation—rather less ludicrous, but in which the same general principles are involved—furnishing a motive for a good story. “What will this woman—*this* woman, mind you—do under these circumstances? Or this man?” But the ordinary writer can hardly hope to leave the question unanswered so neatly as Stockton has done.

A short story demands to begin with an idea. That seems to be one thing the art insists upon. The story need not be full-fledged—although that is the finest

art—it may be merely a fragment, a beginning, end, or middle of what might be a longer story. In fact, some clever writers print their short stories in magazines, and then gather them up and string them together on a certain connecting thread so that they form the chapters of a long story, which is then published in book form. For *ideas*, turn to the newspapers: they are full of ideas. I would be glad to take a contract to furnish plots at the rate of a dollar apiece—clipped from the newspapers.

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### POETRY.

Prof. Sharpe's book on Nature and Poetry is the best and most thorough exposition of the subject I know. Poe's critical essays contain some helpful suggestions. But after all, if a man is condemned to the poet's lot he must work out his *own* salvation. Peradventure it may not be a life sentence. A hint here to minor poets; I mean those who, without great genius, are yet true poets—voices rather than echoes: I doubt if the present generation in America has any commercial use for you. Stop writing poetry if you can; but if not, I beg of you, don't submit to the metrical strait-jackets of the present mode. The old-fashioned simpler forms of verse are good enough; vastly more becoming a true poet's generous emotions and unaffected passion. There are a few writers, perhaps, to whom these exacting modern styles of versification come as natural as thought (more natural to some indeed, and I fear that is the secret of the present vogue); but poetry hardly seems to be the place for elaborate artifice and inge-

nuity. To follow obsequiously the evolutions of fashionable verse seems a sort of literary foppishness, reminding one of a man in stays.

Writing poetry is excellent practice. I think Southey says, it is the best possible preparation for writing prose; he ought to know, he wrote a good deal of prose.

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### *A GREAT NOVEL.*

Because publishers *must* have these "continued-in-our-next" stories, and will pay for them, young authors are prone to begin at that point. They must of course write the thing that is wanted and will be paid for, whether they *can* write it or not. Those who are bound to try, and think they *can* do it, ought to be reminded that this continued interest—that drags the reader along from week to week or month to month—does not always lie in a thrilling situation at the end of the installment. That sort of thing does very well for juvenile stories of adventure, but for older readers a steady human interest is the point. Of course a good "style" is important to a certain degree; but some of our most popular writers are lacking here; their phrases are merely commonplace; yet the human interest is there. These authors, though lacking fine literary gifts, yet through a sensitive imagination *live* with their characters, feel with them, and—entering into their very hearts and souls—are able by sheer sympathy to make them real to the reader. The characters need not be remarkable or the situations extraordinary;—the point is that they be *real* to the author. They cannot be this

unless he is thoroughly interested in them. Whatever he may think before he begins, about the money he is going to make, once he is at it and *while* he is at it, he must think of nothing but his story. Thus it may be simply the every-day fortunes of Charley Jones, but he becomes under this sympathetic treatment a real Charley Jones, and the reader knows him just as if he was a particular friend, and is interested in his getting along; asks from week to week, "How will Charley manage? How will he get out of this scrape or that? How will he accomplish what he has started for?" just as one might inquire of a friendly gossip. Or better still: the reader himself becomes Charley Jones for the time, and says: "How will *I* manage? How shall *I* get out of this predicament?"

It is said that all mankind loves a lover, and the most popular stories are undoubtedly about lovers and their fortunes or misfortunes. But the author who would write a love-story must himself have loved and know just how it feels; so that he can give an *inside view* inviting the reader into the heart of the hero or heroine. Then it becomes to the reader not observation, but *experience*. It seems for the time a part of his own life, and he *must* live it out. So with all heart experiences. The author must himself live through what he describes.

A great novel is not the end for a young writer to begin at. *He must first live and grow.*

### III. THE AUTHOR'S LIFE.

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#### *HYGIENE.*

Sleep is the most important point in hygiene for authors. *A writer can't get too much of it.* There is such a thing as going to bed too early and thrashing about all night. This is time wasted which might be put to better advantage in staying up and sawing wood. But good, sound, dreamless sleep—every minute of it is time at interest, and worth more than any five minutes awake. This is true to every brain-worker. It doesn't matter so much how many hours a man works as the intensity with which he works while he is at it. A concentration of mind that burns the vitality at white heat cannot safely last many hours. Henry Ward Beecher used to say that he could only speak for two hours at a time, but we who remember how he spoke with the tongues of men and of angels during that two hours, ought to realize that he used up as much vitality as ordinary men put into a day's labor. He was almost as famous for his endurance as for his oratory; he could travel all day and lecture every evening along a route that would kill a common man of half his years. He used to say the secret of his unflagging power and vivacity was in being a good sleeper. Once on being asked how he managed to keep his evening audiences

so wide awake he replied that it was by reason of his afternoon nap.

One hour's work from an unfagged high-spirited brain fresh from sound slumber is worth three hours of spiritless toiling and yawning and useless endeavor. Not only is it worth that in *quality*; but it is a fact that men who accomplish an enormous *quantity* frequently work few hours a day.

But good sleep does not begin at bedtime; the brain and body must be *ready* to sleep long before. This going to bed with the brain in a feverish whirl, over-worked or weary and expecting to fall into sweet slumber by the mechanical methods so freely offered in the newspapers, is ridiculous. This counting a hundred and saying over the Psalms and breathing through your ears, and all the other schemes, amount practically to nothing. If the flood is rushing through the mill-race the wheel *will* turn. The only sensible fashion is to *divert the stream earlier in the day*. Stop your thinking and brain-working at least three hours before you retire. Spend that time in moderate exercise or pleasant recreation.

**The blood-circulation.**—Of course the blood is pumped through the heart and goes all over the body in less than two minutes, but at certain points where it finds the blood-vessels relaxed and open, it floods them just as the tide will fill up a wide ditch cut deep into the shore. Or more nearly after the fashion that water will fill up the corner of a soft sponge that it could not penetrate if that corner was wound around tightly with a string. The blood in quantity is needed at these various

points at different times for certain purposes, and *it cannot be in full force in two places at once*. When it has good work to do at one point, don't demand it recklessly at another. A hearty meal calls the blood to the stomach and alimentary tract, where it is needed to aid digestion. Allow it to stay there and do its work. Do not undertake brain-work—which calls the blood to the brain—immediately after a hearty meal; wait until the blood has finished its work in the stomach, or got it well under way. Similarly, exercise calls the blood to the extremities. Cold bathing calls it to the skin, and it is at the extremities and the skin rather than at the head the blood should be when you want to sleep. So don't go to bed with your head packed full of ideas supposing you can go to sleep. The blood having flooded the brain will stay there unless you take the precaution to drive it elsewhere by exercise or a sponge-bath, or a light meal. Beware of keeping the blood too long or too frequently flooding the brain: else the vessels there will lose their elasticity and become chronically distended and congested. Be your own police to keep the blood "moving on."

Walking in the open sunshine, is a good medicine; take all you want and can get of it.

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### WORKING HABITS.

THERE is great advantage in the habit of regular hours, and it can be acquired, in a large degree. It is well if possible to set a certain time for a certain *kind* of work or for some particular task, and to go at it regularly

when that hour comes and keep at it like a clock until the time is up. When, after repeated efforts, one feels himself unable to do this, it is usually because his brain is fagged out and not in a condition to do good work of *any* kind; he is undertaking *too much*. It is better then to drop *all* work for a while.

It is truly said that a man can do more work in six days than in seven. It never pays to "cudgel" the brain when it is weary. Pegasus needs oats rather than the spur. If you come to the point where you are driven beyond reason with work, and see it ahead piling mountains high, and you jaded and unresponsive,—at this moment, when time is so precious that you don't see how one instant can be spared, I will tell you how to save time. Quit, and go to bed and to sleep; when you wake, you have gained half a day. Brain work "ravels the sleeve of care" a good deal faster than manual labor. Three good hours of intellectual fire, burning at white heat, is long enough in any day; and it *ought* to burn with this intensity to bring the Damascus blade to its finest temper.

**Moods.**—Work when you can and how you can. Have good rules and be methodical as far as possible; but when the mood comes on you for work and the work is at hand and there is no good reason why you should not do it, go at it and keep at it as long as you feel able. You will be glad of this in the times when you feel sluggish and weary. It is a great thing not to be dependent on inspiration and yet to make use of it when it comes. By giving a little thought to the arrangement of your work this may be done. One way of

making your moods available is, when in a creative mood, to put aside all you produce, not stopping to revise it until some other day or hour when the mind absolutely refuses to take the initiative; then get out your manuscript and hack away at it. You will probably be in a sour, critical, cynical frame of mind and the errors you passed over with smooth complacence in the heat of composition will stand out officiously. Now, with savage pencil—if you have the courage—many a grandiloquent phrase will be choked off unsparingly. So much better; you are saving an editor this work, and perhaps you are saving your article from oblivion. There is, however, such a thing as injudicious pruning. Some of our best writers never could and never can better their original work by revision, and wisely refrain from attempting it; but, for one of whom this may be said, there are fifty who simply *won't take the trouble*, or who are so tender of their own productions as to lack the heart to cut them up.

**One good test** of your writing is to read it aloud either to an audience of friends, if you can get them, or to an imaginary audience. You will find many phrases that seemed quite pleasing to the eye will stick, and halt, and stammer on the tongue because of their awkwardness, or weakness, or involution. There is no need of falling into captious criticisms even of your own work. Don't cut and change, and turn about words, sentences, and phrases first one way and then another in the attempt to make them, beyond reason and patience, a little better and a little better. Do the best you can with them in the time at command and then let it go; the

next thing you write ought to be an improvement because of the practice. Aim at perfection of course—be content with nothing less; but don't expect it to-day, nor to-morrow, nor the day after.

Collecting one's thoughts is something like driving hens; did you ever try it? A certain gentle "herding" and coaxing will escort them all comfortably through a very small hole; but an attempt to hustle them results in O, what a frantic scattering!

Keep on writing; produce something all the time. It is not so important that everything you write should be printed, but that you should get continual practice. Produce, produce; keep at it.

Fill up.—You can only spend a small portion of your time in writing; a large part of your business is to acquire facts and wisdom. Constant observation and study is a necessity for good work. Don't let the oil in your lamp burn low; fill it every day.

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### DR. HALE'S ADVICE ON WORKING HABITS.

This letter was written to me years ago, when General Grant was living. It is now printed by Dr. Hale's kind permission. I am sure it will be valuable to others as it has been to me.

I believe in what the French call *pièces de résistance*. I think it a good thing to have one steady job in hand,—at which you peg away,—whether you like it or do not like it. The boy said he did not like salt fish. His father told him to eat it "against he did." This sounds cruel, but I think it involves a principle.

But it is not to be overworked. Of course nothing is. I would

abandon the *pièce de résistance* at any moment when I had anything better to say.

After all I believe I hate literature as literature, criticism as criticism. All of us dislike discussion as discussion. And when Mr. Alcott says, "Would you like a little conversation?" I for one am apt to say no. I am forever saying to my sons, "Do not try to be literary men till you have something to say." Oddly enough the man who writes as good English as any man living is Grant,—General Grant. He does so, because in doing things he has never thought of style. Now just as one finds a debating-club a bore,—as one does not long go to a dancing-school, gives up the gymnasium after a year, and dismisses his fencing master after a quarter,—I think one tires of mere literature—what is merely letters and punctuation,—and one tries to get at the thing beneath.

If a man have anything to say, in the long run (and not a very long run either) he will say it.

As to books—I think a little (a very little) is to be got from Coventry Patmore's *Self-formation*. He is a narrow man, but there are one or two points there.

I suppose you have read Bishop Whately's *Rhetoric*. There is a good deal of steady English good-sense there.

At bottom, this is true: that *Genius* has one set of rules and *Talent* another.

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### THE AUTHOR'S LIBRARY.

Mr. Lindsay Swift (of Boston Public Library), whose advice and guidance have been so valuable to me, kindly offers at my request the following lists and suggestions:

Just as there are moments when to the well-born and well-bred the homely precepts of a book of etiquette do not come amiss, so it may be that even to those who are something more than mere beginners in the journey *ad astra*, the following unpretentious lists may have their uses. No attempt is made to present a bibliography of any

subject, but simply some of the latest or most useful titles bearing upon that subject.

#### BOOKS USEFUL TO AUTHORSHIP IN ITS BUSINESS RELATIONS.

**Authors** and Publishers. A manual of suggestions for beginners in literature. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1883.

**Authorship** and Publication. A guide for authors in matters relating to printing and publishing, including the law of copyright, and a bibliographical appendix. London: Wyman & Sons, 1882. The bibliographical appendix gives a list of books thought to be useful to authorship. It is of a high character and adapted more to scholars than to writers.

**Gosse**, Edmund. The Profession of Authorship. This interesting paper is in a volume published in 1887, entitled, "The Grievances Between Authors and Publishers." Field & Tuer, 1887.

**Oldcastle**, J. Journals and Journalism: with a guide for literary beginners. London: Field & Tuer, 1881. A charming and useful little book.

#### BOOKS STIMULATING TO THE LITERARY LIFE OF AN AUTHOR.

Below are furnished a few selected titles of works directing courses of study, and intended to give sound counsel on the literary life in general:

**Books** that Have Helped Me. Appleton, 1888. A reprint of papers in the *Forum*, by Dr. Hale, W. T. Harris, J. Bascom, A. Lang, etc.

**Carlyle**, Thomas. On the Choice of Books. Carlyle's famous Lord Rector's address at Edinburgh.

**Harrison**, Frederic. Choice of Books.

**Jones**, Lynds E. The Best Reading. Consists of several series published by Putnam, which are excellent guides to later English and American publications,—on the whole, the most convenient manuals in arrangement and utility.

**Porter**, Noah. Books and Reading. The latest editions contain the Rev J. M. Hubbard's Select Catalogue of Books.

**Sonnenschein**, W. S. The Best Books. A reader's guide to the choice of the best available books, with prices, sizes, and publisher's name. London: Sonnenschein, Lowry & Co., 1887. An extensive but very useful compilation to a busy man of letters.

## BOOKS USEFUL TO THE FORMATION OR IMPROVEMENT OF AN AUTHOR'S STYLE.

Every writer should be well provided with a good dictionary; and a good etymological dictionary such as Skeat's or Stormonth's is also desirable. Samuel Fallows's *Progressive Supplemental Dictionary* (Chicago: Interstate Pub. Co.) deserves mention.

The use of uncommon or even of archaic words may perhaps be condemned on general grounds; but there is no doubt that to call up an odd word or phrase is to give a certain snappiness or flavor to what you write. An odd vocabulary may have its uses, as well as a large one. The books mentioned below are all valuable:

**Abbott**, Edwin A. *English Lessons for English People*. Boston: Roberts Bros.

— *How to Write Clearly*. Boston: Roberts Bros.

**Alford**, Henry, Dean of Canterbury. *The Queen's English*.

See also G. W. Moon's *The Dean's English*, *The King's English*, and others of his vigorous essays.

**Avery**, Elroy M. *Words Correctly Spoken*. Cleveland, Ohio, 1887.

**De Quincey**, Thomas. *Two papers on rhetoric and style*.

**Garlanda**, F. *The Fortunes of Words*. N. Y.: Lovell & Co., 1887.

— *The Philosophy of Words*. New York: Garlanda & Co., 1886.

**Higginson**, Thomas W. *Hints on Writing and Speech-making*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1887.

**Hill**, Adam S. *Our English*. Harper & Bros., 1889. Professor Hill has well established his fame as a perfect watch-dog of the English language. His criticisms are short and severe, but always just.

— *Principles of Rhetoric*. Harper & Bros. In this book one realizes that a long step has been made past the old and formal advice of Whately, Blair, and Campbell, all worthy conservators of our English tongue.

**Long**, John Henry. *Slips of Tongue and Pen*. Appleton, 1888.

**Mathews**, Wm. *Literary Style*. Chicago: S. G. Griggs, 1881.

— *Words: Their Use and Abuse*. Chicago: S. C. Griggs.

**Monkhouse**, W. Cosmo. *The Précis Book*. London: C. Lockwood & Co., 1877-78. Admirable for teaching conciseness of statement.

Osmun, Thomas E. (*Alfred Ayres*) The Verbalist. Appleton, 1882.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. Memories and Portraits.

Trench, Richard C. Study of Words. Various editions.

Waites, Alfred. Forgotten Meanings. Lee and Shepard, 1886.

Writer's Handbook; A Guide to the Art of Composition. Lippincott, 1888. A generally useful work, with advice on printing and publishing.

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### NO EXTRA CHARGE.

**Material.**—Look for material in the surroundings with which you are familiar. We read about Scott and Dickens and other great novelists travelling and investigating in order to become well-informed about localities: When you come to treat new fields or strange countries, it will be time to travel for material; but as a beginner, use what you have already at hand. A fault with young writers is the disposition to overlook what is right under their noses, about their own homes and in their immediate neighborhoods. But successful writers nowadays are depicting the local types with which they have become thoroughly acquainted by living among them and being of them from childhood. Human nature is alike everywhere, and a writer who has the discernment to discover men and women as they really are in any locality will find readers wherever men and women can read. It is true that a new dialect or patois does not make a good novel, nor do an assemblage of strange, uncouth, peculiar characters; but the great novel is something to be aspired to in the distance by young writers, as the crowning work of a literary life not to be expected at the beginning. It will not do to wait until one can produce something

startling before trying to do anything. Get practice all the time by continual writing; *learn* to describe features of grander significance, through patient practice in describing homelier and more familiar scenes.

**Reading.**—Concerning the acquirement of an expressive vocabulary and the cultivation of style, every one probably has his own best way of learning; he may, with advantage, pay attention to the suggestions of others; yet after all he must consider his own individuality. Most authorities agree that constant reading of the masters is a help in forming style. This certainly is one of the easiest and most enjoyable ways; but for one who does not care to take his time and ease—one who will accept the drudgery and wants to get right at the meat of the matter—I should say a regular study and committal to memory of Roget's Thesaurus of English words is one of the best ways of acquiring, at least, an extensive vocabulary. Study the book in sections, and until you can recite a paragraph aloud readily, without missing a single word, then take another paragraph; keep at it until the mention of a single word will immediately call to your tongue's end every synonym in the book. This may be a laborious fashion—not half so delightful as reading Shakespeare or Carlyle, or Stevenson, or Newman, but it seems to me this hard work gives a larger return in vocabulary. Given the tools, you can of course learn much about using them from the masters.

Robert Louis Stevenson says he practiced continually for many years to gain facility in every writer's style that he thought worth imitating. With the result that he is a literary mocking-bird.

The reading of a good thesaurus gives something more than words. It even suggests ideas, and frequently will start the mind off on a track that will lead to something rich.

Of course you read the little Boston magazine, the *Writer*. If not, subscribe for it immediately; it costs only a dollar a year, and every month you will get your money back. You *can not afford to be without it*.

**Personality.**—Insist always on yourself. Learn what you can from others; take all the good advice you can get, but then do your own best way. Don't try to adapt yourself to everything there is to know, but take the facts that come naturally to you, that belong to your temperament and frame of mind.

If you have money, and don't need to write for your living, nevertheless insist on pay; it is only fair to the professional writer not to spoil his market; beside, it is due to your own self-respect to put your work to the test of competition in the open market.

Don't be a hog; be willing to live and let live. Give other writers a chance; do all you can to help and encourage them. Don't be afraid of rivalry, but rather look upon every writer as a friend and brother, and if he is at work in the same line as yourself so much better; help him all you can.

Don't be afraid to accept favors that you would willingly give, and don't be slow to give a great many favors which you would never ask.

Don't think that literature is the great purpose of life; don't imagine that everybody in the word is either writing books or reading them. There is a good deal else

to do, and book-making and book-reading is a very small part of the business of life. But writing isn't to be disparaged or belittled, to write well is a fine art; it is a trade, a business; and a person earnestly engaged in it need not feel himself in the least a Bohemian unless he chooses, but altogether as staid and respectable as one doing carpentry work or shoe-making or manufacturing fine flour out of wheaten grits. Yet, after all, life doesn't depend upon writing, writing depends upon life. The writer himself, like every artist, depends for his living—indeed for his art—upon his audience. It is only as he *expresses* the thoughts other people are thinking, that the world has any place for him. So far from his being superior to the common herd and independent of them, if it were not for them he would have no existence. He may insist that he knows his business better than the crowd; probably he does. Yet even Shakespeare would have been forgotten long ago if the thoughts he expressed had been exclusively his own. It is because he voices the thoughts of the million that he is immortal.

Don't be a recluse; live out in the world as much as you can, among living men and women, and be one of them; not for their sake, but for your own.

It is a good thing to enlarge your acquaintance among professional men if you can do so in the natural order of business; but don't run after great names and try to add something to your own prestige by association with people more important than yourself. It is a great deal better to stick right at your work, and while you are digging away producing something worth read-

ing you are really gaining more prestige than you could in any other fashion. For with good work comes reputation and then others will *run after you*. Don't bother great men asking them for opinions on your work. They seldom have the heart to tell you the cruel truth—even when they know it, and they don't always.

Don't be writing letters all the time about everything to the papers as if the world was eager to know your opinions on every subject under heaven. When your opinion becomes of any value—or at least when you have a reputation—your opinion will be asked. Then you can say almost any foolish thing and it will be swallowed. One of our notorious medical specialists is doling out commonplaces and telling what everybody knows at the rate of—I should judge about a column a day, from the frequency with which his name appears in the papers—and all of this to the most rapturous acceptance.

“Hear what Dr. Blank says about digestion: He says that you should not eat more than you can digest, for if you do the digestive functions are sure to be over-taxed, and the consequence is you will wish you had not.” “Hear Dr. Blank's wisdom on the subject of sleep: 'Every man must have a certain amount of sleep; some need more than others. Others need less than some, but everybody needs some. Don't try to go without it; you must have it,'” etc. But Dr. Blank has a great name, and when you have a name you can do the same thing and get well paid for it. Meantime you must obtain reputation, or at least a certain degree of notoriety in some fashion: perhaps by writing bad novels, as Dr.

Blank has done, or by disparaging the excellent novels of other physicians, as Dr. Blank has done, or by attempting to belittle the brains of the finer sex, as Dr. Blank has done;—that is he attempted it but came out—a surprisingly diminutive figure—at the extremely little end of the horn.

**The one question** that greatly troubles most earnest young writers is of *themselves*; how to know beyond doubt that they have true genius. Thousands of ambitious beginners send their verses or stories to men of high repute, and beg for a verdict on the work; saying within themselves, “*He* will surely know. The editors may be unfeeling; the world may be stupid; but this man will certainly recognize my talent and say the ‘Open sesame!’ admitting me to fortune.”

But it is worth while to remember that this “court of appeals” to which the young writer turns, holds its authority by appointment and consent of the “unkind” editors and “stupid” public; and it is within their power—especially the public’s—eventually to reverse any judgment obtained from individuals.

There is a wide difference in tastes with no accounting for it; and it is in the nature of things that a writer may be acceptable to the majority and intolerable to the few. Keen, intelligent critics disagree; what seems to one a merit, is in another’s eyes an irremediable fault.

Beside this, in young writers themselves the order of development is so irregular, and the rate of progress so different in different individuals, that no critic can apply an unfailing rule to the possibilities of a beginner; nor can he himself.

I cannot believe there is any infallible test that will immediately settle a young writer's career;—any Midas touch to transform his doubts instantly into golden assurance; any fire-brand reducing in a night his cherished hopes to ashes. I feel certain that while the fortunate and highly gifted may early see their destiny, the majority of us must live and wait for our answer; as it comes year by year in response to slow, steady, unremitting “toil and endeavor;” building moderate reputation and success upon the packed and trampled foundation of repeated failure. The test, after all, for most of us is one of endurance; and the question is, *can we stand it?*

**Be content** to take what the gods give you and face courageously your limitations as soon as you learn what they are. Be willing to learn what they are. It was one of the most remarkable and commendable things about Longfellow that he knew well enough, he could not be a Shakespeare, a Dante, or a Milton. He accepted the message consigned to him and heartily delivered it; satisfied to be just himself, no more; and this was enough for us.

**Have confidence** in yourself—don't be rebuffed by anything that is said to you, or by anything outside of yourself; your only failure will be from within, no matter what others may say. Let them criticise—and learn from their criticisms—but don't let them stop or discourage you as long as you love the work for its own sake. There is—some where, some how—a place for you; perhaps not the exact place you expect; yet a place that only you can fill. Have faith in yourself.

*WRITING FOR CHILDREN.*

Think of children as actively growing up and looking the way they are growing ; don't try to write within their thoughtless comprehension ; but rather a little above them ; keep them on tip-toe, for they grow faster than the press can turn out your writing.

Miss Kirk says in this connection :

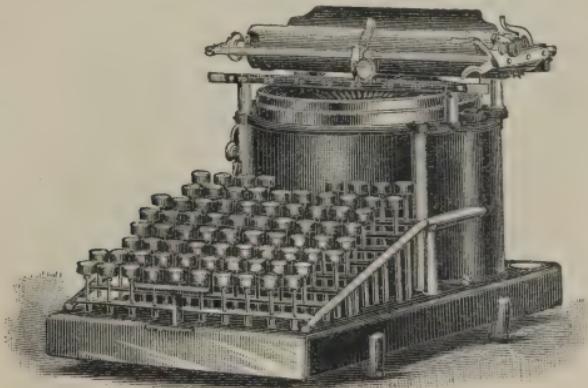
A sad or depressing story is as unfit for a child's mind as the moss-grown walls of a cloister for his little bounding body. Pathetic tales of dead birds and maimed kittens and outcast dogs have made too much imaginative misery for the little ones. Let the birds sing and the kittens frolic and the dogs enjoy life in the children's stories, whatever sad fate may befall them in city streets. Children should be made happier and healthier by what they read as by what they play.

This is well said and very true; yet there is another side of the question. Most healthy children are practically little savages; the number is probably increasing in the coming generation, that tends so largely toward a fine physical development. It is as natural for many of these youngsters to maul and pull and squeeze and torture dumb animals as it is to breathe. Not from meanness or inherent wickedness, but simply because they have not been educated; and it is an important branch of their education that they be made to look upon animals as fellow-creatures and friends. This heart education, if given in the right way, so far from making the children namby-pamby, will give them more genuine manliness and womanliness. Beside, true pathos,—if not overdone—is as genial an influence as humor, and with it goes naturally hand in hand.

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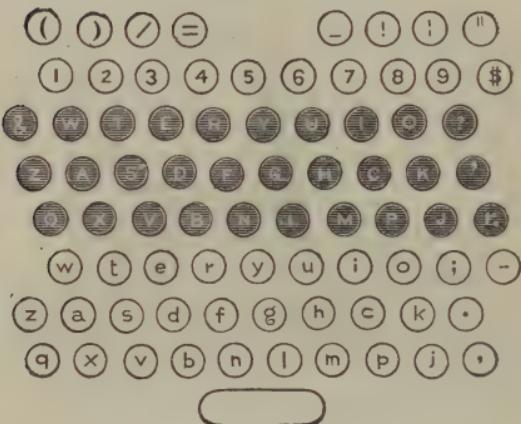
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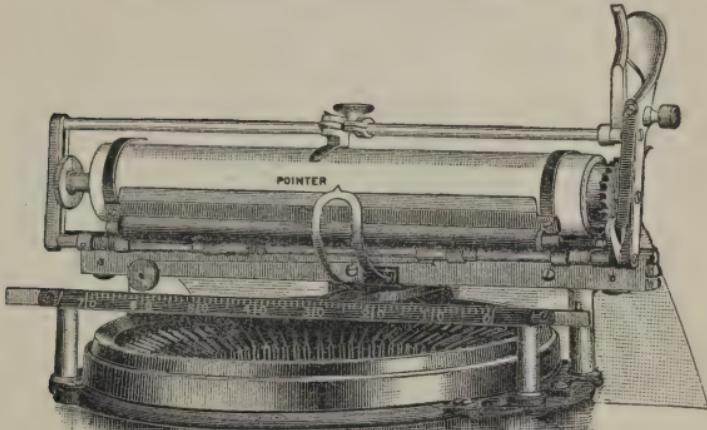
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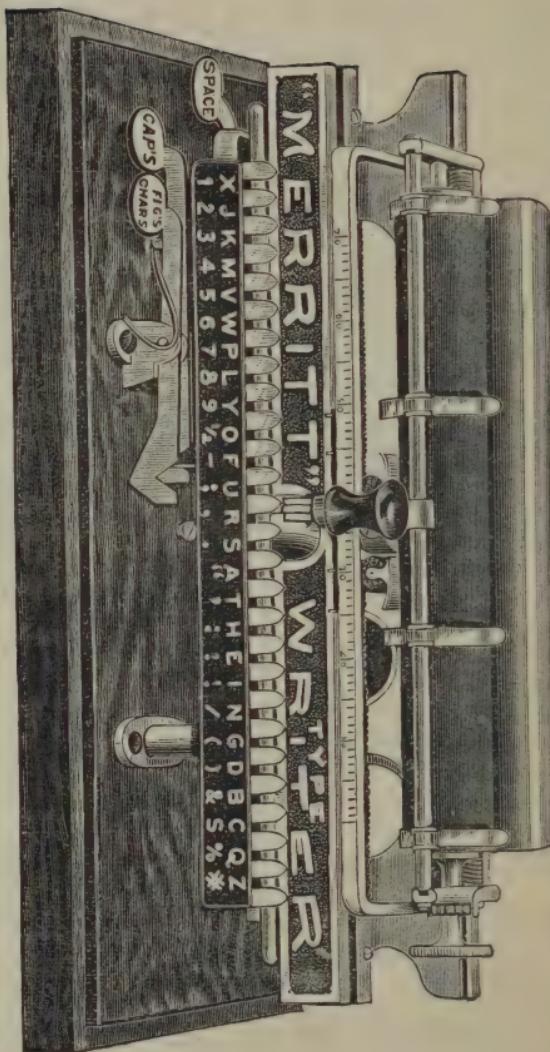
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